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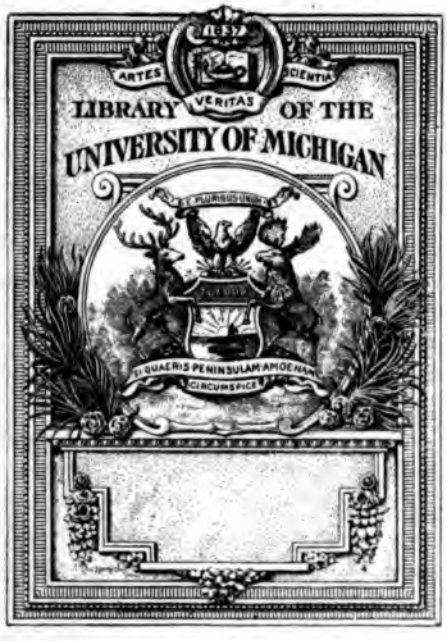
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THIS IS No._____

ECHOES OF MYSELF

Romantic Studies of the Human Soul

I. Narodny

THE EMPTY GRAVE

We both looked at the grave-stone beside us. The stone was entirely in shadow now.

Echoes *of* Myself

ROMANTIC STUDIES *of the* HUMAN SOUL

By IVAN NARODNY

Illustrated by EUGENE HIGGINS

The International Library Publishing Co.,
102 & 104 W. 38th St., New York.

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IVAN NARODNY

J. F. TAPLEY CO.
NEW YORK

DEDICATED

TO

Mrs. and Mr. Nathan Straus

AND

Mrs. and Mr. Henry Goldman

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INTRODUCTION

In order to give a definite idea of the tendency and character of the following echoes of my Inner World, I wish to say a few words of introduction. Not only am I a firm believer in the theory, already expressed by Leo Tolstoi, that the beautiful is dependent upon the moral factor and has no practical value independent thereof, but I go a step farther and say, that all real progress in art proceeds not merely from the combination of the ethical with the æsthetic, but rather from the union of these two with science, which, according to the opinion of Tolstoi, is superfluous when one is properly settled in ethics and æsthetics. Tolstoi, therefore, preaches a return to primitive simplicity, a return to rustic nature.

As far as I have been able to study human nature and its surrounding conditions and as far as my varied experiences have proven, I cannot agree with him and Schopenhauer, when they say, that civilization and scientific development bring only suffering, and that the industrial slavery of the present age has been brought about through

too much knowledge. Though it is perfectly true that our wrong financial and social structure is the cause of much suffering, yet, this is not due to our too intellectual education; but because our moral-æsthetic development has not kept pace with the intellectual progress of the present age.

I am convinced that science is the great spiritual weapon in the hands of mankind, which shall yet facilitate its life in detail and at large. That it has become otherwise, is because it has been utilized by a few industrial usurers in order that they might follow their ambition and increase their enjoyments. This has been rendered possible by defects in the social system and also by defects in human character and in the soul. The railroad, the telegraph, and all other new mechanical devices or improvements are meant, not for making money for the privileged few, but to facilitate the life of the people. *A man ought to be the spiritual universe in miniature and the universe ought to be the huge man*—that is the real meaning of true progress.

My theory is, that æsthetics, ethics and science have to enter into a harmonious combination and form that universal force, which shall lead future generations to happiness.

In order to give a slight impetus in that direction, I have decided to reproduce the following

strata of my spiritual organism. In the Russian village stories one will not find merely stories to amuse the reader; for it is not my purpose to show Russian characters and life, but to depict souls as they exist in their natural primitiveness, helplessness and sincerity. There is here nothing of that superficiality and obviousness which dominate our degenerate civilization, and nothing also of that imitation and conventionalism which has vitiated modern literature and life.

On the other hand, the stories of modern life hint at that social and individual tendency, which is the real foundation of progress and the foundation of the universal harmony. Finally, the stories of truth and suffering are sketches from an over life, the soul-life toward which our inferior motives unconsciously aspire.

The first part of the book is devoted to idealistic realism, in which character is the leading feature. The second part deals mostly with idealistic romanticism and therein the skeleton or the plot is the chief thing. In the third part the character and plot give place to an idealistic philosophy of a higher life, a higher beauty and a higher truth. The morbid realism and conventional hypocrisy, which having stagnated the souls and the surroundings of the educated classes have stopped the natural progress of life,

are by this philosophy severely condemned.

We have to tear down the pillars of our wrong social system, the old churches, the old oppressions, the antiquated gods, the money madness and all brutal heroics and to build up instead new souls, new orders, new morals and new art. Art, the rostrum and the press are the weapons with which to begin this ideal fight and these shall shatter our decayed idols to pieces.

It is with such intentions that I send out this book, which will, I hope, do something to make the ideal a living reality. As I am not yet a master of English style, it being but three years since I left Russia for America, I trust the reader will be gentle toward my shortcomings.

Studies of Primitive Man

Unspoiled by fanaticism, by mercenary education and superficial legislation he stands with his life and natural primitiveness high above degenerate civilized man.

THE AERONAUT OF LIGOVA

Oleksha looked like a monstrous owl as he moved himself in order to make ready for flight.

THE AERONAUT OF LIGOVA

MIKHAIL, the long-bearded alderman of Ligova, a typical Russian village on the Volga, had just returned from Saratoff and was enthusiastically telling the news. The village was dependent for its news solely upon those who came back from a visit to the town. Everybody was anxious to meet such as soon as possible, for they had no books, no newspapers to inform the villagers of that wider life in the outside world of strife and civilization, which was a sealed book to these Ligovers. In Mikhail's square dining-room, which was at the same time his family sleeping-room, the kitchen, the parlor and also the whole interior of his house, all the notables of Ligova were gathered to hear the news. Among them were Petka, Vania and Oleksha, the three most distinguished personages of the village.

All four were men between forty-five and fifty years of age and with their long disheveled beards and hair, with their red or blue shirts and wide black trousers they looked like survivals from past centuries. Petka was a musician and the tailor; Vania, the blacksmith and the village

architect, and Oleksha, the jack of all trades. Oleksha's business was to mend the kettles, to repair the stoves, to cut hair and trim beards, to pull teeth and to cure every disease of man and beast. He, therefore, was the most respected man in the place and his word was law and gospel. When Oleksha said: "Your hair is too long and needs cutting," or "Your face looks lean; you need a thimble-full of gunpowder mixed with ether, which will give you an appetite," he was at once asked to administer whatever he thought necessary, which he did with solemn pride. In most of his numerous functions Oleksha was very generous and he seldom charged anything in those cases which he considered duties of honor. Such, for instance, were pulling teeth, the curing of every sort of disease in people or animals, and his predictions of dreams. If anyone should offer pay for services, which Oleksha explained were the result of his intellect, he would feel terribly offended, would clench his fist, spit on the floor and shout angrily:

"Do you think that I am an usurer? Do you think I charge for wisdom and knowledge like the educated professionals? The gift of helping others is not a cow to be milked, or a whip to be used for the weaker brothers, as the

lawyers and doctors do in the cities. Do you think that money can buy my wisdom and sympathy as it buys kerosene and sugar? No. When I have helped some chap who needed it I am happy, and I suppose that's about the best reward one can expect. It's a shame to be paid in such cases. You see if your hair is too long, it breeds every sort of vermin; if your tooth aches, it has been infected by some sort of bad food. If I can relieve you in such troubles, it's my duty to do it, but not to exchange it for money, and that's about all there is to it."

Everybody knew how serious Oleksha was when he said this, therefore nobody ever dared to offer him any pay for his functions of honor. It was quite a different question when he repaired a stove, a carriage wheel or did something in the mechanical business with which he had to earn his living. In such cases Oleksha charged well and demanded that the pay should be quick.

Among all the village people Oleksha considered Vania, Petka and Mikhail as his most intimate friends and with them he discussed openly many of his secret plans. His friendship with Vania and Petka was based on their professional standing as his colleagues, while that with Mikhail was of a different character. He considered

Mikhail his friend not because he was alderman, not because he was rich, but because Sasha, his sister-in-law, was a young, robust and handsome widow, who owned not only a new house and stable, but two horses, two new carriages, two sleds, half a dozen pigs and eight acres of very fertile land, which, if it were owned by Oleksha, would make him independent for life and give him plenty of time for his various honorary functions. At present he was obliged to work so hard for his food and household expenses that it left him little time for his ideal work of curing diseases, cutting hair and introducing new truths. Sometimes when alone and thinking of Sasha, the rich widow, Oleksha would soliloquize thus:

"What a pity that one has to pay so much attention to money and that sort of thing. I would not think of marrying Sasha if I had plenty of money. If I had money enough—and fifty rubles a year would be more than plenty—I would at once buy new scissors and not bother with those made by our village blacksmith; I would also get nice forceps, such as are used by dentists in the town to pull teeth. I would keep a big bottle filled with ether, another with castor oil, a third with alcohol, a fourth with gunpowder, and lots of small bottles for immediate

use in all sorts of diseases; and I would have a watch, which nobody owns here, to be hung near the door, and everything would impress the patients, which is practically the main thing; but now my instruments, my room, my medicine and manners look so bad that the people don't think I have any gift. Well, if I had all that, I would cure free of charge all the sick people not only of Ligova, but also those of all the other villages, which would add much to the fame of Ligova.

"'Who is he?' a stranger would then say, pointing at a man from Ligova, and another would reply: 'He is a Ligova man.' 'Is that so?' the stranger would exclaim, and stepping to the Ligova man he would take off his hat, hold out his hand with a flattering smile and say: 'How do you do, Ligover? How glad I am to meet you. Say, do you know a man, whose name is Oleksha? We've heard of his wonderful hair cutting, of his famous cures of diseases and of many other noble deeds.' 'Well, well,' the Ligova man would reply, 'Who does not know Oleksha in Ligova! God bless him and his posterity! No dog in Ligova barks at him, no man passes without greeting him and lifting his hat.'—Eh, it would be so good, so good. And Sasha's wealth would do all this."

Oleksha was indeed a very noble Ligova man.

On this particular evening, while everybody was listening attentively to Mikhail's talk of the news in the town, Oleksha was absorbed in his own ideas, sitting behind his host's long table and leaning his head on his hands. Mikhail was telling them about a balloon in which two men had ascended from the square of the town and had sailed above the clouds till they disappeared from the sight of the spectators. Vania, Petka and all the others listened to this unusual story, with the interest that one listens to an adventurous fairy tale; but Oleksha was sure that the balloon was not a real thing, but something connected either with a trick or with the bewitching of the eye. He could not reason out how there was something light enough to lift two men in a basket and carry them above the clouds, unless there was an artificial arrangement high in the air, whence it was pulled up by an invisible rope. Having listened to every detail of Mikhail's talk, Oleksha objected:

"Mikhail, say what you will, but I can't believe your story of the balloon. You see, things can not be made lighter than they really are, but only heavier; for if they could, the grocer would cheat one every day by making his weights lighter than they are, thus increasing the weight of his goods. I can't imagine that there is a

thing lighter than the wind, except the smoke of a chimney. I am sure that it is some trick, no doubt a trick."

Having listened to Oleksha's vehement objection, which seemed to appeal to all the gathering, Mikhail lifted his hand and shouted, excitedly:

"Oleksha, you are a man with brains, but nevertheless occasionally you are as silly as a boy. I would not tell you lies. I saw the incident myself, with many thousand others; among them the barkeeper Grishka, our priest's coachman Peter, and lots of others. I saw with my own eyes, how the balloon was gradually filled with something and became light as a feather. Then I saw how the two men got in the basket which was hung below the balloon and ascended high in the air until they disappeared. There was no trick about it. I suppose everybody remembers when five years ago, coming from the town, I told of the bicycle, and Oleksha teased me, saying such a fast running wheel was impossible. Now he has made himself a bicycle and rides on it. I bet you he will be just the same the first man in the village who makes a balloon."

"Mikhail, eh," began Oleksha, tossing his hair, "you should not feel offended if I doubt you. It does not mean that I don't believe you, but it means that I doubt the possibility of such

a balloon generally. I can't see how a drug can lift a balloon, when it did not lift the bottle or barrel in which it was kept previously. Funny, very funny, but you understand what I mean? Last winter I was in the town and the stout barkeeper Grishka—everybody, of course, knows him—well, he told us a story which he pretended to have read in a newspaper, that someone in a foreign country had manufactured an airship with which he had sailed scores of miles above the clouds after which he had again descended to the ground, and not a finger of that man was hurt. But nobody in the whole bar believed his story—nobody. There was for instance, Peter, the priest's coachman, and he laughed at it. You see, one has to be careful nowadays, for the people educate themselves in the schools not to gain wisdom, but simply to learn tricks in order to make money out of other people's credulity. When an educated person says to another: 'I am glad to meet you,' he really means: 'Can I use him?' When a rich man sends his boy to a school his first thought is 'how much money will the education bring him?' The schools don't teach wisdom, but tricks, and that's the reason why one has to be cautious."

Oleksha's argument sounded very strong and everybody agreed with him. Even Mikhail him-

self came to the point of looking at it as the trick of educated fakers. When, late in the evening, all the villagers returned home from Mikhail's house, they still discussed the subject in a lively way; however, Oleksha was meditative and taciturn. He was no longer thinking about the balloon, but his thoughts circled around the subject of flying with artificial wings on which he had long racked his brains.

Going to bed, Oleksha could not sleep, because of his great desire to fly. He did not think about constructing a balloon, which seemed to him just as fantastic as making a trip to the moon, but he thought of flying in the air as a rooster flies. He had many times thought of such an invention and had often discussed its possibility with his intimate friend Petka, the tailor, who admitted that every man could fly if he only had the right kind of wings and knew how to move them. The talk of the balloon by Mikhail had revived this favorite idea and now a new incentive was added by the thought of the tremendous impression that his flying would make upon Sasha, the rich widow, who would feel flattered at being wooed by such a brainy man as Oleksha would then prove to be.

The next morning Oleksha called on Petka and began to discuss the subject of flying. The

latter found the idea really very interesting, which greatly encouraged the inventor.

"What would be the best material to cover the frame?" Oleksha asked his friend, whom he considered a great authority in his line.

"To my mind sheep-skin is about the best," replied Petka, as one who knew his business perfectly. Counting a few moments on his fingers, he added: "I should think that fifteen skins would be plenty. But when and where will you make the first flight?"

Oleksha gazed at Petka mysteriously for a moment and muttered:

"I'll try next Saturday evening secretly with you and when I have seen that I am sure enough in handling the wings, I will make a formal flight Sunday afternoon. I intend to make the first experiment from the top of my barn-roof toward the yard of Sasha, which is only a distance of two hundred yards. You see, I want to descend in her yard and surprise her with my invention. I think this would be sufficient to turn her head so that she would become my wife."

"I should say so," answered Petka, guessing at his romantic intention. "But I would suggest that you fly not from your own barn but from the barn of Sasha. As soon as you are ready with the framework I will sew the skins and do my

part. I wish that we could keep the matter secret."

"Well, but she might see us on her roof while we were busy with our preparations," mumbled the inventor, skeptically shaking his head. "How could we climb up on the roof without being seen by her dog? Nero is a very vigilant beast."

"Oh, that's nothing," quothed Petka, who was greatly admired for his skill in all sorts of conspiracies. The back of her barn adjoins the street, whence it is easy to get to the top of the roof with my long ladder, and as our affair takes place late in the evening, nobody will be likely to notice us. You simply leave that part to me. When you are ready with your work, let me know, and I will do my part. I tell you it's a great idea."

Oleksha at once began to work on the frame, which was to be made from the wood of the juniper tree. His theory was that in order to fly, one had to utilize the energy of every muscle, as one does in swimming, and the shape of his wings were to be an exact imitation of the rooster's. Furthermore, it was his opinion, that a man would need four wings, one for each hand and one for each foot, which would have to be fastened tight with cords. A great problem was the size, but his brilliant mind soon led him to a

practical solution. In order to find out the exact figures, he killed his old rooster, weighed it and measured the wings. The rooster weighed five pounds and its wings had, together, a length of two feet. Oleksha weighed a hundred and fifty pounds, therefore he would need thirty times two feet, which would necessitate wings fifteen feet long for each hand and foot. But as Oleksha thought that his strength was far superior to that of the old rooster he reduced the length to only five feet each.

In five days the frame work was ready and none of his neighbors knew for what it was to be used. Some guessed it was the model of an automatic clock, some that it was the model of a new bicycle, while Mikhail explained that it was the frame of a mowing machine. But Oleksha chuckled mysteriously and was very proud of his invention—more than proud, he was happy.

Having finished the mechanical part, Petka was invited to do his part and sew the sheepskins on the completed frames. Instead of fifteen skins, they used only ten. As soon as everything was finished, the inventor locked the door of his room in order that his invention should not be seen. Everybody was curious to know why Oleksha locked his door, which he never had done

before, and there were rumors in the village that the mysterious invention was a giant concertina on which Oleksha would play the next Sunday. If you could have seen Oleksha's jovial face, when, having finished all the work, he bound the wings on his feet and hands and practiced flying on the floor of his room, you would have laughed as hard as Petka did as he watched the awkward motions of his colleague. Oleksha felt that the moving of the wings almost lifted him from the ground and argued:

"Flying is exactly like swimming, and I am sure any one can fly like a rooster, when one is accustomed to use wings. The best practice will be from the roof of a barn, whence, if the first attempt should fail, one would not hurt himself seriously in falling."

Being convinced of success, the aeronauts anxiously awaited Saturday evening. After everybody had gone to sleep and only the monotonous song of the crickets sounded from the fields, Petka and Oleksha walked with their apparatus toward the barn of the rich widow, where they arrived without having been noticed by anybody. Both climbed quietly to the top of the roof and Petka began to fasten the giant wings onto his friend. When everything was ready, Oleksha looked like a monstrous owl.

Oleksha's heart began to beat faster when he saw from the roof the lighted window of Sasha, who had not gone to bed, but was busy baking pan-cakes in her room, while a shepherd and the dog were playing in the yard. The thought came to Oleksha how glorious it would be to fly before her window, attract her attention, and then be graciously invited in to have supper with her. Then she would be so impressed that Oleksha would not hesitate to make an immediate proposal of marriage. Having finished his musings, he turned to Petka, whispering:

"Now, which direction shall I take for a trial? There over the sunflowers or here over the pond?"

"I would suggest that you fly over the pond for it is shorter and in case you should fall you would land in the water and not be hurt. I'll watch from here," said Petka, examining him again to see that everything was properly fixed.

"Well, I think you are right, for I would not like to break my neck by my flying experiments, though I would not like to fall into that muddy pond. Bye-bye!"

"Good luck, Oleksha! Now, one, two, three!" muttered Petka, after his friend had crossed himself and stretched his wings.

Oleksha jumped with his wide-spread wings,

but alas!—he did not fly like a rooster, but he fell with a tremendous splash into the pond, throwing the water all around the yard. He disappeared under the water; only his wings were visible in the darkness.

The dog, getting a glimpse of the falling aeronaut was startled by the splash of the water and set up a terrific roar, rushing to the pond on the surface of which Oleksha now appeared, covered all over with mud.

The shepherd boy, who also saw the unrecognizable bulk falling and then emerging on the surface, shouted:

"Sasha, quick! Hurry out! The devil has flown into our pond. Ugh, Sasha, did you hear? The devil, with huge wings and a terrible face, is swimming in our pond."

"Oh, heaven be gracious," replied Sasha, crossing herself and trembling as she appeared at the door and gazed with a shiver at the dark, moving figure in the middle of the pond. Having convinced herself that there was really someone with big wings in the water, Sasha had no doubt that it was the devil, so she shouted into the room:

"Semen, Annutka, get up! The devil is in our pond."

Then, turning to the yard, she set the dog upon the unfortunate aeronaut, saying:

"Nero, catch the devil! Nero, bite it!"

Semen and Annutka, the maid and her husband, who already had gone to sleep, muttered from the loft:

"If he is in your pond we will catch him. It will be lots of fun to catch a live devil."

"Nero, catch him! The beast has four wings. Sasha, did you ever heard the like of that?" roared the shepherd boy as he gathered sticks and rocks in the yard.

The maid and her sleepy husband rushed out in their night clothes and tried to get a glimpse of the devil whom they had only seen in pictures and whom the priest had described as the merciless torturer of souls in another life. There was nothing so bad and nothing so terrible to the imagination of the village people as an inhabitant of the underworld. The priest had often spoken of the devil as a wandering figure with a long tail, with horns and wings, from whose persecution only prayer or a holy picture could save one. To see a devil personally was considered something miraculous. The realization that such an infernal being was right here before their eyes almost froze their blood with horror. This was fortunate for Oleksha, as it gave him

time to think how to get himself out of this terrible predicament.

The poor inventor was dazed from the shock, his mouth was full of dirty water and his face was covered with mud and weeds. And now seeing Sasha at the door, he almost fainted from shame. "This cursed flying has put me in a bad fix," muttered Oleksha, grimly, as he pondered how to get out of it without being recognized. "The only way is to escape as soon as possible," he thought, hoping that the darkness would protect him. As he reached the bank of the pond, a rock, thrown by the shepherd boy, struck against his neck and he saw Annutka, the tall maid, grasp a big stick in order to hit the devil who, as she thought, had done lots of harm to her and to others. But Petka, who all the time had watched the tragedy from the roof, anxious to assist his friend, shouted:

"Comrade, get out, quick!"

Nero noticed him at first and dashed, barking, toward the barn. All the eyes at once turned toward the roof and the astonished Sasha wrung her hands, saying:

"Annutka, my heaven, look on the roof! Another devil is still there."

"Oh, yes. I see him, exactly in the shape of

a man. But he seems to have no wings. Semen, get some rocks and let's get him down."

A violent bombardment of the devil on the roof began, for everybody was anxious to hit him. Petka realized his danger and was glad to escape by his long ladder, on which he descended safely to the street from the other side of the barn. This gave the unfortunate aeronaut a moment to get out of the water and, to try to escape. He could not move as fast as he would if he had not had the giant wings on his feet. It was necessary to tear them off and he began to untie the cords. But when one is excited things don't progress as well as would be the case otherwise. Oleksha was unable to get his wings off and felt horrified in his desperate situation. "If I only had a knife," he exclaimed, as he ran across the yard. The furious Nero and the excited people, however, did not lose sight of him, and they soon surrounded him with a terrific noise.

"My heaven, what long and hairy wings the demon has!" exclaimed Sasha.

"He's surely a captain of his race, for instead of two he has four wings," added Semen, striking furiously at the wings on the feet.

In the meantime Petka, in order to help his comrade, had quietly opened the big gate. But

his way was barred by the curious neighbors, who had rushed in to see the reason of the noise in Sasha's yard. They were followed by half a dozen dogs, so that Oleksha had to surrender, or put up a desperate fight. Everybody shrieked with surprise at seeing that the devil was caught and everybody wanted to hit him as hard as he could. Sasha already had beaten him twice on his back with her hot pan, and Annutka had grasped a bottle full of tar which she now hurled against his head. The bottle struck his protecting hand and broke with a crash, splashing the black liquid all over his face. The dogs and the people were in such excitement as they never had been in before, and Mikhail, Oleksha's friend, who had just come up, shouted:

"Don't beat him too much—better get some ropes and make him a prisoner."

"Let's arrest the devil," roared all the gathering, and Semen hurried to get the ropes.

The aeronaut, whose tarred face was unrecognizable in the darkness, was angry at Sasha's beating him with the hot pan, and grumbled:

"Sasha, don't beat me any more, it hurts, don't. I am not a devil. I am—I am—you know I am Oleksha.

"Sasha, don't believe him, don't believe his imitation of Oleksha's voice! The demon is a

clever fellow who can imitate anybody," warned the crowd in reply, while Sasha, gazing at the miserable prisoner, shouted:

"I know your tricks, you Lucifer. I love Oleksha and you probably came to kick up some trouble. Eh, you sly dog. You can't fool me!"

"Oh, ho, ho!" roared the crowd. "We never saw Oleksha in such a shape—don't fool us, we know our men."

"Sasha, say it again, please say it again!" muttered the prisoner, happy at what he had heard. "Do you love Oleksha? Do you?"

"Shut your mouth, you dirty fly. You can't change my mind. It is already decided," replied Sasha. "Hello, men, get a rope from Semen and let us bind the demon and then beat him till he confesses why he came into my pond," suggested Sasha, and Semen flung the rope around the unfortunate captive.

Oleksha having heard Sasha's confession of love, did not mind being imprisoned. It was so unusual for a live devil to be caught in Ligova, that the thrilling news of his imprisonment by Sasha spread immediately throughout the village. Women and men rushed breathlessly in their night clothes or half dressed to witness the catching of a devil. Oleksha was sure that the people would not beat him when they should see his face,

which, on account of the darkness and the tar, which covered it, was unrecognizable. Fortunately, Petka suggested bringing a light. He was pale and trembling, but at first did not dare to tell the truth. But when he saw his colleague so miserable and realized that the truth would be found out anyhow, he interfered, by striking a match and holding it up before the tarry face of his comrade, which was at once recognized in the light.

There was never a greater noise in Ligova than when the excited people and dogs found out who the devil really was. One should have seen the sad face of Sasha when she recognized her sweetheart, beaten, wet and bound with ropes. Sobbing she cried:

Oleksha, my dear, I suppose your love for me deprived you of your reason for otherwise you never would do such a foolish thing. I don't mind your jumping or the beating, but I feel sorry for the ten sheep-skins which you have spoiled so foolishly."

"Sasha, dear sweetheart, I don't mind the sheep-skins, when I am sure of you," whispered the happy aeronaut, pressing the hand of his idol. "But how about fixing a date for the wedding?"

"Wait till I wash you clean from the tar and cut off your ugly wings. There is plenty of time for that," replied Sasha.

THE SUFFRAGIST OF DURNOVA

THERE was much excitement in the village of Durnova, because Peter, the first son of Andrei, the richest man in the place, was engaged. Everybody was talking of the great event. The bride of the rich man's son was Viera, the daughter of the poor blacksmith Pavel. Only a few months ago she had been nothing in comparison with the other maids. The others had silk scarfs, silver necklaces, silk-ribboned waists, city shoes and horses with glittering sleds when they went to church on Sundays, but Viera had no such show things. Fortunately, she was bright and pretty, a fact which attracted the eyes of the best young men of the village, till the rich Peter had asked her to become his wife.

Viera was not popular with Liza, Maria and the other girls of Durnova. They had never looked upon her as an equal, but used to make fun of her. Nastassia, the sister of Peter, had been one of the greatest critics of Viera, whom she considered a silly coquette. Whenever she saw Viera in her simple skirt, cotton waist or

sandals, she tossed her head ironically and put on such a superior air, that Viera never dared to accost her. And now such an insignificant girl was to become the wife of her brother. It was more than she could bear.

Strange to say, Viera had always been the subject of the village gossip, one at whom all the conventional old women and their daughters sneered. They always made fun of her. Viera realized this and at first felt it keenly, but soon she learned to pay no attention to such nonsense, as she termed it. She took lessons every Sunday from the daughter of the priest, whom she paid with eggs, chickens and honey. This was a great piece of news for the village gossips. All the girls and women who never visited a school, never were able to read a book nor write a letter, thought it was so funny that the daughter of a poor blacksmith, who had no horse, no wagon and would have no dowry, such as the other girls expected, should learn to read books and to write letters. All the people discussed the matter as an incident of the greatest importance.

"Nastassia, did you ever hear of a girl, who has no cow or pig for dowry taking lessons?" asked Liza, the daughter of the village alderman, a tall, red-haired and ruddy looking girl with a

shrill voice, as she entered the rich Andrei's house.

"You mean the blacksmith's Viera?" queried Nastassia, and she pursed up her lips ironically, shook her head and made her face half an inch longer. "That's the climax of her foolishness. I am ashamed that she is a native of Durnova. Everybody will think Durnova is full of foolish girls. She really does harm with her oddities to the name of our village. You see what I mean. Nothing ridiculous or foolish has ever happened here. No girl here has ever used false teeth, false hair or painted her face, and now this Viera is going to ruin our reputation. Don't you know that if a man should ask me next: 'Where do you come from?' I never would dare to say: 'I am a Durnova girl.' 'Eh, you funny Durnova girls make the men laugh at you,' a fellow would say, and I would be ashamed to death. Don't you agree with me?"

"Voi, my darling, you are quite right. And you see, she flirts and acts as she likes. She has —do you know, Nastassia, she has made an agreement with the priest's oldest daughter to take lessons in reading and writing, for which she pays five fat chickens and three dozen fresh eggs for the summer. She thinks by the end of

the summer she will be able to read books and write letters like a teacher. What she is going to do next, nobody knows. Probably she's brooding about some new foolishness."

"May be she is going to correspond with the Czarina, and write books and poetry," interrupted Nastassia, gesticulating vehemently, and clenching her hand. Both girls laughed so loud that old Andrei, who was sipping tea in the other room rushed out to hear the joke.

"What's the matter, Nastassia? What are you laughing at? Tell me, and I'll join you. It's better to laugh all together. I always like to share the fun and sorrow of others for it makes the noise bigger." So spoke the old grey-bearded Andrei with his humorous face, as he gazed wonderingly at Liza and his own daughter, who still tittered.

"We are only laughing at the blacksmith's Viera. She's going to take reading and writing lessons from the priest's daughter, so she can turn the head of some rich land lord or city nobleman. Eh, Andrei, take care of your son, he might fall into her net," said Liza and again she began to laugh. Nastassia joined her, but old Andrei listened rather indifferently, with only a slight smile on his lips, saying:

"I don't see any joke in that. If she wishes to

take lessons in reading and writing, let her take them. I don't think it bad that a woman does such things. If a man wants an educated wife, let him take her. It's not bad if a wife should be able to read her husband funny stories or cook a meal according to a book's prescription."

"Eh, Andrei, you are so funny," said Liza, scratching her head. "But what would you say if such a woman would take the breeches from her husband and dress him in her petticoats. Would you like to be the husband of a clown, of a woman dressed like a doll in all kind of ropes, and made up like a soap bubble? The slightest finger touch would squeeze her breath out."

"Viera is a pretty girl and there is no lack of wit and mind in her. I think her little absurdities are all right. As long as an absurdity does no harm, it is all right. I do not care what my daughter-in-law does to increase her grace and prettiness. Woman's education is all right." After Andrei had said this, he left the girls to continue their discussion.

In spite of the scorn of the people of Durnova, Viera finished her lessons with the daughter of the priest. She could read fluently, could write a letter and thought herself a woman of great distinction. She cared little that she was ostracized from society, for she

knew that the young men of the village really respected her more than they did before. Everybody wanted to dance with Viera, every unmarried man was interested to discuss with her such questions as they could not solve easily. One of these was whether the earth was round, which nobody believed till Viera told them that she had read it herself from a book. Even Andrei was interested in the subject and doubted the correctness of the argument, but when Viera read the whole marriage and burial ceremony exactly as the priest did it, there was a general feeling that she was about right in the statement that the earth was round like an egg. Her reputation came to a climax when she not only read the letter of Ilia, who wrote home about his homesickness and his dissatisfaction with the military service, but also wrote him a reply at the request of his friends and parents. Everybody thought her letter was far superior to Ilia's letter.

Nevertheless, Viera was unhappy. She discovered that reading books and writing letters did not bring her all the success she had expected. She had thought that education would enable her to get all the leisure and luxury, the fine dresses and things the city people and the landlord's ladies seemed to possess. She could not get even an apron, like the one the priest's daughter had,

and she missed many other things she had longed to have. Having read at least three or four books and many chapters of the Bible, Viera thought she would like to go to the town and teach the children of the rich people, just as other women did. After thinking the matter over and over, she decided to leave Durnova and walk to the town, to look for a position as a teacher with some rich people.

She called on two or three families but failed to find anything acceptable. Every lady whom she asked for a position looked at her puzzled, and explained, smiling, that she did not need a teacher. Finally she entered the house of a newspaper editor, and his wife seemed to sympathize with Viera's situation more than anyone else. She asked Viera to take at first the position of kitchen maid, and promised to advance her gradually according to the progress of her education. Viera, anxious to avoid the shame of returning home without any success, was glad to get anything. She would be ridiculed and laughed at more than ever, therefore she became a kitchen maid.

After she had been three months in the town she went back to Durnova to visit her parents and to show her new blue skirt, large yellow apron, red waistcoat and polished new shoes.

When she entered the village she felt as if she were carried on wings. The whole outfit had cost her eight rubles and one ruble in many small silver coins was still in her pocket. She had painted her cheeks and her hair was fixed up as nobody ever had worn it in the village. She was very proud of herself, and glanced at the village girls contemptuously. These, much amazed at her appearance, were not pleased by her return. They knew that Viera's visit to the village would attract the attention of all the young men of Durnova, therefore they hated her more than ever.

"Oh, I would like to throw dirt at her," muttered Liza furiously and Nastassia mumbled:

"It's a shame for Durnova! Bah, those crazy men feel flattered to talk with her! I wish that somebody would open her mouth and see if her teeth are genuine or find out how tight her body is with all the stays around it. A shame for Durnova."

It was a great surprise to all the village people that Peter, the son of the rich Andrei, was so fascinated by Viera's charms. He spent all the afternoon in talking with her at her father's, the blacksmith.

The boys and girls of the village gazed with awe at Viera and whispered respectfully:

"Heaven's, she is now a teacher in the town."

"The blacksmith's Viera reads and writes like the priest," the old women would whisper, pointing at her with their bony yellow fingers and trying to touch her new dress.

"What polished shoes she wears!" said the men, who now greeted her by lifting their hats, just as they did for the nobles. Peter, especially, was never tired of listening to her sparkling conversation and he would have liked to look at her yellow apron, blue skirt and red waist all the day. He thought he would never get tired of her talk about reading and writing. But there was a new subject of which she spoke more enthusiastically than of all the others. Viera told how her mistress wrote and spoke about woman's suffrage and she thought it would be a great thing if such topics should be discussed in Durnova. She said that she was anxious some time to explain in detail about woman suffrage, but now she only wanted to devote her time to a private discussion with Peter, which she did. The result of this private discussion was that Peter told her, blushing in his excitement, that he would like to marry her and buy all the books she liked. Viera, after a short hesitation, had embraced him tenderly as she had read in a story book that a girl should do when

a young man declared his love. Peter, not knowing this love prescription, squeezed her, as he thought every village groom should squeeze his bride; but as soon as she explained that such expressions of affection are done more quietly by the city people and by those who read and write, he at once apologized and ceased to be so demonstrative. This confession of love by Peter took place in the back yard of the old blacksmith's house and nobody saw it.

Viera left the village just as if nothing of importance had happened and nobody suspected the surprise which Peter created when he told his father a few days afterwards that he intended to marry Viera. Andrei was apparently satisfied with his son's choice and asked the time of the marriage.

"I wish it could be now, but I suppose I shall have to wait for a few weeks, as it is necessary to make elaborate preparations for the wedding ceremony, which will last three days," said Peter, shrugging his shoulders.

"I should say so," replied Andrei, rubbing his chin. "But I don't understand what the people mean when they say she is a suffragist. You see I would not like to have a woman for my daughter-in-law who says she is a suffragist, when I don't know what she means by it. I don't

mind if she puts a little powder on her cheeks and I have no objection when she reads or writes things prohibited by the priest, but I would not like her to be anything wrong. There are lots of wrong things, which may make marriage unhappy. You know what I mean?"

"No, father, I don't. You see, she did not explain to me exactly what suffrage means. It is something different, I know that," muttered Peter, and he looked much puzzled, at his father.

"Well, what is that something? You can tell me."

"Father, don't ask me. You know yourself it is strange to tell such things," said Peter, blushing with downcast eyes. Andrei looked at him seriously, shrugging his shoulders and said:

"Never mind your strange feelings. You can tell me anything. I would not ask you if it were not such a strange word, 'suffragist.' Is it a secret?"

"Secret? No. It is simply so strange to talk about love matters. But since you insist, I may say that she asked me not to squeeze her, but simply to kiss as one would swallow a raw egg. 'Kiss without noise,' she said. That's all."

"You don't mean that suffrage means only kissing without noise, or love without squeezing?" queried old Andrei, and he burst out

laughing. "If that is all she means by the word suffrage, I have no objection," continued Andrei with humor. "I think she knows those things better than we do, for she has read all about love in books. Well, if she likes a noiseless kiss better, give it to her. Hm, suffrage is a funny thing. It's all right—ha, ha—with noise or without noise—just the same—" said Andrei, and he began to sip his tea. For Peter it was a very important article of marriage discipline.

Everywhere Peter went, he was asked for an explanation of the word suffrage. The girls of the village who did not know anything about squeezing said that suffragist meant a woman with a tail and horns or made other foolish remarks, which made Peter very angry. He could not explain the subject himself and as the teasing increased, he thought it would be better for him to go to Viera and ask her for some explanations which he could tell the village people in order to stop their jokes. At the same time he wanted to make various purchases for the wedding ceremony.

Having harnessed his horse, Peter drove to town and went to see his sweetheart, whom he met with a noiseless kiss. When he told her all the trouble in the village about the suffrage question, she soon consoled him, saying:

"I am glad that you take such a lively interest in suffrage matters. I am only sorry that my mistress is not home for she could tell you things which sound like oi, oi, oi. The chief point is that a suffragist has equal rights with the man she loves. She has the same rights as her husband, exactly the same rights."

Peter listened to everything Viera said with the greatest attention so as to be able to repeat it in the village. Having repeated this expression several times, he pondered awhile and then shouted:

"But, my dear, I don't know what you mean by equal rights! You see, to my mind she is already equal to the man she loves. She can ask him for a noiseless kiss, she has a right to kiss him just as he has a right to kiss her, she has a right—well, you know what I mean. To my mind every woman already has those rights which a suffragist pretends to demand. I don't understand what you mean."

"Well, sweetheart, it is hard to explain the exact rights if you don't understand how to write and read books. It's somehow a secret of the educated women."

"Oh, I see," muttered Peter, frowning. "I'll tell them in the village that it is a right that belongs to a woman who reads and writes. But

I'll tell nothing about the squeezing, nothing about the noiseless kiss and so on. I'll tell them that a suffragist has no tail and horns, but that it is the title of any woman who can love a husband as you love me. Isn't that so!"

"I think it is about so," whispered Viera, proud of her great knowledge.

After they had discussed this question awhile, she concluded that now was the right time to arrange the details for the wedding festivities.

"Now, my dear, I wish to have chicken soup at our wedding meal. I want you to prepare a nice chicken soup to be served in big white dishes on the plates. I wish that every marriage guest should eat from his own plate and have a thin spoon with a knife and fork just as the city people do. You see that is one point of the suffrage question," said Viera, gravely, and she made a list of all the particular things her groom should purchase.

Peter never had heard of a village marriage meal with plates, forks and knives, one for every guest. One big wooden dish filled with roasted meat and another with fried fish, wooden spoons and one knife for ten guests—that was all Peter knew of wedding festivities; such instructions as Viera had given he never had heard before. Everything, therefore, was new and it seemed a

terrible waste of money for every man to have his own plate, knife and fork, and to have besides two white dishes for the chicken soup. But realizing that she was a suffragist he thought he had to do those things. When he went to purchase the plates and other things which Viera had described, he chose everything as it appealed to him. Among other things, he purchased two white porcelain dishes, to be used for the chicken soup. He chose two with pictures of hens and chickens inside. The plates, forks, knives and spoons looked very elegant to Peter's eyes and especially the two big porcelain dishes for the chicken soup; and he thought that after all, woman's suffrage was a fine institution. He knew now what to say to the village people and he imagined how the wedding meal with the porcelain plates, knives and forks would impress the guests; so he really enjoyed thinking of his bride as a suffragist.

All village gossip at once stopped and all doubt disappeared as soon as Peter unpacked the two dozen plates, the two dozen knives, the forks and the thin spoons. Much respect was shown by the curious village women, when they saw the two big porcelain dishes to be used for the chicken soup. Liza and Nastassia, who formerly made fun of Viera, admitted that the suffrage

idea really had made her a big woman and she might become a fine wife for Peter, after all. The boys and girls peeped in through the window of rich Andrei's room, to get a glimpse of the porcelain plates, the knives and the forks, which were kept on a long table before the wedding day, to be shown to the guests. The wedding day of Peter and Viera was an exciting topic in Durnova for weeks before the event.

The festivities, which were to begin on Sunday morning and end on Wednesday evening, finally began. All the guests gathered with solemn faces in their best holiday dress at the house of Andrei. The street before the house was packed with scores of ragged children who wanted to see how the guests would manage to eat from the plates, with the thin spoons, the forks and the glittering long knives. The priest and his wife were also invited as guests of honor and were to sit next to Peter and Viera.

Everything looked bright and promising when the guests took their seats around the long tables where a plate was passed to each one separately. Everybody seemed to be confused, for nobody had ever before used fork and knife and nobody knew how to eat from a plate. But the guests hoped to get over such a difficulty by taking example from the priest, his wife and Viera.

Viera, unfortunately, was still dressing when the guests took their seats around the table and her mother announced that the guests could begin the meal, and that Viera would soon come down. That announcement was listened to with throbbing hearts, and Andrei, the father of the groom, who sat next to the priest, asked Father Gregor, as his guest of honor, to open the feast with a grace.

Father Gregor made the grace, crossed himself and said that the meal could be put on the table. According to Viera's directions the meal had to begin with chicken soup. Peter, who was the manager of the wedding meal, lifting his right hand, gravely, now said to the serving maids:

"Chicken soup, in the big white dishes first, then comes the roast, then the cabbage, then the coffee and then the fried fish."

The maids obeyed respectfully and placed the chicken soup in the two big porcelain dishes on the table. All the guests gulped, imagining how delicious chicken soup would taste from white porcelain dishes and from their plates, and all gazed at the priest to see how he would take the soup and how he and his wife would eat it from a plate. Andrei stood up and, taking one of the big porcelain dishes, offered it first to the priest with the following toast:

"Father Gregor, you are the wisest man at the wedding, so it is your duty to begin with the chicken soup. I suppose all our guests have heard that the upper sort of people eat with forks, knives and spoons from their plates, but nobody ever has eaten this way himself, so there is a little embarrassment in that respect. But we can all take an example from you."

Father Gregor and his wife looked amazed at the two big porcelain dishes from which the chicken soup was to be served and refused to begin, shaking their heads. The priest looked mutely at his wife, shrugged his shoulders and she made a still longer face.

"Don't you want our delicious chicken soup?" inquired Peter, much surprised. "Please taste it."

"No, Peter, we just had our chicken soup before we left our house, so we don't care for it," muttered the priest, sniffing and glancing at his wife.

"But your wife could taste it," interrupted Andrei, passing the big dish to her.

However, as she signified that she would not care to taste it, the guests were confused. It would not matter much if the priest and his wife had refused what the guests knew how to eat, but they had refused that which nobody knew how to begin.

Accordingly, Andrei put the dish on the table. Much confused he was pondering whether first to take a piece of meat out with his fork and then pour out the liquid, or to first pour out the liquid and then take out the meat with the fork. While he was thinking what to do the guests gazed at him with throbbing hearts. Then he remembered that Viera was not there. "If she would come she would surely know how to eat the chicken soup from the plates," thought the old host. Andrei called twice for Viera, declaring that the bride alone should open the wedding meal, after the guests of honor had refused to do so. After a pause Viera came, nodded solemnly to the guests and took her seat gravely besides her serious looking groom. Everybody thought her so pretty in her city dress that all eyes were turned to her as to a holy picture.

"Viera, please begin the meal," said Andrei, passing the white porcelain dish to her.

Viera, who had not seen the new dishes before, now looked at them with surprise, then she glanced at Peter and seemed to be extremely confused. She covered her eyes with her hands, as if ashamed, and exclaimed, sobbing:

"It's awful, you pigs! Heavens, what a disgrace!"

"Viera, what's the matter with you. The

chicken soup is all right. You have not tasted it," grumbled Andrei and all the guests looked at her with fright, for they could not guess the reason for her vehement objection.

Suddenly Viera, without a word of explanation, grasped the white porcelain dish, containing the soup and threw it out of the window. She grasped also the other dish from the table and threw it out also. The two dishes, falling on the street, broke to pieces, with a crash. The curious village children gathered around the spilled chicken soup, seized the bones and the pieces of meat and began to eat them with relish, while the frightened guests gazed blankly at the tragedy. Everyone shook his head with awe and exclaimed, crossing himself:

"God be gracious. Viera, is this something connected with woman's suffrage?"

"It's more than that," replied Viera, blushing. "Say, Peter, how could you do such a dirty thing? Where did you get those two dishes for the chicken soup?"

"Viera, my dear, I brought them, with the plates, from the town, as you told me to do," replied poor Peter, with an excited gesture. "They were so nice and the most expensive of all. Eighty kopecs is the price of each dish, while a

plate costs only ten kopecs. And now you have broken them."

"Peter, you're a fool in refinement and suffrage. Those two dishes which you used for the chicken soup are not used for meals. No refined person puts anything to eat in a wash-basin. Nobody, I tell you. Aren't you ashamed to do such things?"

The guests had listened breathlessly to Viera's scoldings, and Andrei whispered to Platon, his table neighbor:

"But why shouldn't we eat chicken soup from a porcelain basin? What's the difference?

Tossing his head and affecting to cough, Platon muttered:

"I never heard of a porcelain wash basin, never. I would like to know who is such a fool as to wash his dirty hands and face in a porcelain dish. That must be the foolest fool in the world who is so proud. And it looked so fine, too!"

But Father Gregor and his wife burst out laughing and they laughed so loud and long that the usual humor of the wedding guests soon returned. But before the frightened maids began to serve the guests another course, Andrei stood up, lifted his hand and, striking the table, shouted:

"I am the host of this wedding and after this scandal with the chicken soup I don't want any suffrage things mixed with our traditional manners. I'll throw out the other things also. They make our eating too ridiculous."

Saying this he grasped all the plates, the knives and the forks from the table and threw them out in the yard, shouting to the curious children:

"Boys and girls, pick up those toys for yourselves. I don't want them. I don't like things which are connected with suffrage and chicken soup. I want my old simple manners to be preserved."

The children roared with delight, as they scrambled for the rejected implements of culture.

"No more suffrage for Durnova," shouted the guests, and now feeling more comfortable without the restrictions of etiquette they began to eat with a zest, Viera and Peter furthermore promised each other to have nothing more to do with such new-fangled notions, and the wedding feast went on merrily, without plates, knives and forks, as in the days before woman's suffrage was heard of.

THE LAMOVOI LETTER

LAMOVOI is a typical Russian village of about three hundred inhabitants, fifty or sixty dilapidated log houses and twice as many barns and stables. Two small smoked windows with glaring red or blue frames and smutty-looking straw roofs without chimneys are seen in each house. All the smoke caused by making the fire and cooking the meals passes out through the open door. To build a chimney costs three rubles, and as the villagers do not know how to make one and are too poor to pay for having it done they are obliged to do without such a luxury.

"Maria, a letter has come. Hurry and tell Vassili and everyone you know that a letter has just come for Peter, the blacksmith. Ilia, the policeman, brought it, and gave it to Tatiana, Peter's wife, because Peter was not at home. She was greatly surprised at receiving it and, trembling, concealed it behind the holy picture. She, poor angel, became so pale and excited over the incident that she neglected to feed her cows, sheep and pigs. She herself has not eaten any-

thing—now she has no appetite. I was there nearly an hour and saw everything. I saw the letter—the yellow envelope with the two blue stamps. The cows are lowing and the pigs grunt in the yard—hungry—I pitied them—gave them some hay and potatoes—but what do I know about feeding another man's animals? I am a stranger. Poor, poor Tatiana!" Thus spoke Filip, a tall, lean and gray-bearded peasant of the village of Lamovoi.

"A letter for Peter?" queried Marie, with surprise. She was a stolid-looking woman of forty, and stood at the open door of her house, where Filip, dressed in a dirty-looking ragged sheepskin fur had paused. "How did it happen?" she asked. "Is it an important letter and do you know who sent it?"

"Oh, *dorogoi*—my dear! I don't know that and neither does she because she did not dare open it. Since I can remember no letter has ever been opened in Lamovoi by the person to whom it was handed. Only the one to whom it is addressed or the priest has the right to open it. I remember twenty years back and during that time eighteen letters have come to our village," muttered Filip, proudly, gazing at the clouds.

"Filip, that's great news indeed. A letter—to Lamovoi—that is unusual," said Maria, gravely

shaking her head and gesticulating vehemently, while Filip stood silent as a statue. "I will put out my fire and not bother any more with the cooking and the preparations for dinner. A letter has come—who then has time to eat a dinner or to sit quietly in the house? Let us go first to Vassili, for he is so wise, and the oldest man of the village, and then we will see some others."

Maria disappeared hastily into the room, for she realized that to tell her neighbors that a letter had come would prove the most extraordinary news that she could give. Filip stood solemnly like a sentinel outside the door in the street, his thoughts turning to the letter. In a few minutes Maria returned, wearing her blue apron and a new red scarf around her head, which she put on only during the festival days when she went to church or made her important visits.

"But can you guess from whom the letter might be?" began Maria in a melancholy voice. "Poor Tatiana! She must be excited. Is Anna, her daughter, not at home? Perhaps she became so frightened at the incident that she went away. Well, well! After I am through with my calls I will go and feed her animals. I will take also some sugar and vodka and make her a cup of hot punch. Vodka with hot water and sugar is

good for excitement. But where is Peter, her husband?"

"He is in the woods, getting timber," replied Filip. "He will not be at home until late in the evening, unless a messenger is sent immediately. I imagine how surprised he will be when he hears that a letter has come. I think it is the second letter he has ever received. But the question is, who can read the letter?"

"H'm; I do not know a single man at Lamovoi who can read. I do not know anyone at Velikoe, and Velikoe is twice as large a village as ours," said Maria more gravely than before.

"I know many people at Velikoe who can read a book," replied Filip, lighting his pipe, "but I think hardly anyone there can read or write a letter, except Father John, the priest. I am sure he will gladly read it, because he has read more than five letters for our people. As I remember, he has never asked any pay, either, except two quarts of vodka and one small pig. God give him health."

"P'st, Philip, whispered Maria, as if being reminded of something very important. "I know a man who is in our village now, who can read it. He arrived last evening. They say he is a soldier and a friend of Vassili—his name is Vasska. Maybe you remember him. He sings

merry songs, accompanies them with a concertina, reads newspapers and writes letters of all kinds? Two years ago he was in our village. The funny songs he sang and the wonderful dances he performed made everybody laugh. He is dressed in black, carries always pencil and paper with him and writes letters as well as the priest. The only trouble with him is that he gets drunk after two glasses of vodka and loses his head. He cannot drink as much vodka as our men, without getting drunk."

"That's the trouble with all the people who can read and write," interrupted Filip. "They cannot drink as much vodka as, for instance, Peter or I, without losing their heads. That is the result of education. You know when I wanted to educate my son Nica, the priest John said to me: 'Don't be a fool and send your son to a school. The school will spoil him. He will become a drunkard or a thief. It will be better for you both to leave him without education.' I think the *batushka* (priest) was right. He would not say that unless he knows. I myself have observed that the men who can read and write are worse than those who cannot. After reading books and writing letters and such silly things they begin to brood upon things which they have read and they become troubled, ill and

unhappy. Look at our doctor, the priest and the landlord, look at all the educated city people and you see how much more they are worried and distressed than we are. They are not happy and education never brings happiness. They sleep more, eat better and live in better houses than we do, but nevertheless they look pale and sickly. The Czar and the priests must be aware of this fact; that's the reason they object to education and the schools."

"God knows," answered Maria, and pondering a few moments, she continued: "I think they are not sincere in refusing to allow us to educate our children. The priest and the Czar believe that their children should be taught to read books and write letters, but they don't like it that we, the peasants, should educate our children. But one thing which I cannot understand is how being able to read and write is bad for one."

Filip gazed gravely at Maria, lifted his hand and said:

"Maria, I know. It is because education was originated not by the Holy Ghost, but by the old devil himself. God, for instance, does not know how to read a book, neither does He know how to read a letter. But the devil is a clever chap and knows how to do both. Had God

understood reading and writing He would not need the priest to read to Him the prayers in the church every Sunday. The priest reads all the prayers and sermons from the book, because God does not know how to read them Himself."

Maria looked with surprise at Filip, for she never before had discussed such questions with men, and after thinking a moment, she replied:

"If that is so, then the priest must be a disciple of the devil for he writes and reads."

"No, no," shouted Filip, energetically shaking his head. "That is not so. The priest has been shrewd enough to learn how to read and write from the old devil, but he has nothing to do with him now. He reads and writes for God, who is too old to learn.

"Oh, I see. That is very curious. So God is an uneducated man like all our village people. How glad I am to hear that."

They walked a distance without any conversation, for Vassili's house was the last, back of the village. Then Filip stopped and began:

"Now, Maria, do you remember how long it is since Vassili got a letter from Vasska, the same man who is now staying with him? I remember he wrote to Vassili that he wanted to marry a girl from Lamovoi, because the cows and pigs, which are given as dowry to a girl,

are fatter and much better breed here than those of any other village. He wrote also that he liked our maids because they knew how to make coffee, bake white bread and cook delicious meals."

"Oh, I remember now," replied Maria. "Three days before my hen had hatched the chickens which are now six months old. That was in summer. All the people of the village listened, breathless, to the priest as he read the letter in Vassili's garden. A pig was roasted for that occasion and the priest ate with great appetite. I made tea and Peter brought some vodka. That was a great time.

Thus chatting, Filip and Maria arrived at the house of Vassili, which they entered with serious faces.

The news that Peter had received a letter spread like wildfire throughout the village. The topic of conversation everywhere was—the letter. The women, appearing at the open doors and windows, showed excited and curious faces. Scores of ragged children walked around the house of Peter, curious to know where the letter was kept. Tatiana, Peter's wife, sat dejectedly in the room near the holy picture and seemed careworn and pale. She looked as if something of the greatest importance had happened.

After a general consultation on the part of

Filip, Vassili and the other notables of the village, a messenger was sent to Peter to tell him to come home immediately.

The coming of a letter was always the most exciting event at Lamovoi, and for many weeks afterward it remained the leading subject in the minds of the villagers. One letter as a rule, was received during the year; and this was read aloud before the whole population of the village and the day was made a sort of festival. The life in Lamovoi was one without books and letters—a good and happy life, as Filip and all the people themselves believed. That there could be a better and more perfect life anywhere else in the world was not dreamed of by anyone.

Peter hurried back from the woods with the messenger. Grave and stern was his look as he passed the dozen boys who stood at the corners of the streets. Their behavior to Peter was more respectful than it had been ever before, as they whispered to each other in awe: "Peter has a letter."

As he entered the house his wife in her holiday dress met him at the door, grasped his hand with tears in her eyes and muttered:

"God be praised that you are here! I put it behind the holy picture. It is in a yellow envolope, with two blue stamps—and heavy. When

will you have it read? Do you intend to invite the priest? A pig will have to be killed and roasted in honor of the reading."

Peter sighed and his long face grew still longer. He took off his sheepskin fur, washed his hands, and walked gravely to the holy picture. Standing there he reverently crossed himself nine times, knelt before the picture nine times, and repeated his sacred prayer nine times. This done, he tremblingly removed the letter from its hiding place, turned it over and over in his hands, examining it as carefully as possible. Putting it in a big wooden box he said:

"Tatiana, my dove, I will not open it now. The messenger boy told me that Vasska, a friend of Vassili, is in the village. Two years ago he was Vassili's guest and talked and joked with our Anna more than with any other maid—you will probably remember him? I did not like him because he shaved off his beard, cut short his hair and wore a silver watch with a gilded chain. To my mind a man who does those things is vain and haughty. Otherwise he was a congenial fellow, and as he can read and write letters it will not be necessary for us to invite the priest."

"Oh, yes. I know him. He liked our cows and pigs. He asked me how many cows and pigs I would give as a marriage gift with Anna,"

replied Tatiana, leaning her head on her right hand while gesticulating in the air with the left.

Several hours passed. It was now evening. No one in the village owned a watch, but the people could tell the time at night by the stars and during the day by the sun. The room in which the letter was to be read was filled with people. This room, though the largest, was not large enough to accommodate all.

Between Filip and Vasska, the stranger, who had been invited to read the letter, sat Peter, holding the big wooden box which enclosed the letter. As he drew it forth one could hear the beating of the hearts of the assembly, so great was the attention.

"Vasska, I request you to be so good as to read the letter for us which came today," spoke Peter with a grave voice, turning to Vasska. Then Vasska glanced at Peter, who tremblingly kept the letter. As Vasska hesitated, he smiled.

"Don't you want to read it?" asked Filip excitedly, looking with surprise at Vasska. Vasska burst out laughing. He laughed so long and so loud that the people did not know what to make of it. At last he whispered:

"This is the funniest incident in my life."

Then he coughed, chuckled and replied:

"Very well. I will read it to you."

"Hush! Be quiet!" said Peter to the audience, shaking his finger.

Vasska then opened the envelope, unrolled a small photograph and handed it to Peter who began to stare at it while Vasska began his reading:

"My dear Peter and Tatiana:

"Without shaking your hands and seeing your faces, I greet you as one whom you know. I have something important in my heart which I will explain to you in this letter. I want it to be a secret among ourselves.

"Two years ago you had some nice looking cows, pretty pigs and a nice red carriage, which you said you would give as a marriage gift with your daughter, Anna. I think I could use them now. But I want you to add to these two new suits of homemade clothes, one for me and the other for my old father. Please let me know immediately if these and Anna are still at your disposal? If so, will you then give them all to me? I enclose my picture which I hope will impress you. I will suit your daughter better than will anyone else in Lamovoi. I will never abuse her, never get up before sunrise and never refuse to buy a new apron whenever she likes. I remain your old friend—Ha, ha ha!"

Vasska laughed again and said that his reading

was finished. Everyone rushed to get a glimpse of the picture, everyone touched the letter and smelled it. At last the picture was passed to Anna. She gazed upon it, tittered and showed it to her friends. Peter took the letter and picture, stood up and asked Anna, gravely:

"Do you know this man? How does he look to you?"

Then he turned to Vassili, Filip and the other notable men of Lamovoi:

"You have heard the letter and you have seen the picture. What is your opinion?"

"H'm," replied Vassili. "We have all heard the letter and seen the picture, but I would not suggest that you marry your daughter and get rid of your property by mail. Two cows as a gift to Anna are really too many. And besides he wishes to have the two best pigs, your new red carriage and the two suits of clothes. Anna is a pretty, healthy and strong girl and does not need such a heavy dowry. When the city people marry their daughters they do not give even one cow as a marriage gift. This man demands too much. Judging from his pitcure he is not worth much himself. For instance he wears a white collar and a yellow necktie like the city people. He is, no doubt, a conceited man."

"That is not all," interrupted Filip; "I never

heard of anyone marrying by letter. Letters and books are invented by the devil and you must not sell your daughter in this way. You know that even the Czar does not marry his daughters by mail. Write him a reply, and say that we at Lamovoi have no cows or pigs for men who like to marry a girl by mail."

"Anna, do you think you would like him?" asked Tatiana, her mother, her eyes full of tears.

"No, no," shouted Anna. "I dislike him. His hair is short and his coat looks so silly. He can't be much according to his picture. I do not care to have my cows and pigs owned by a man like that."

"That's right," added Vassili. "But, Vasska, what do you think? Should Peter give his daughter, his cows and pigs to such a stranger?"

"I think he ought to give them," spoke Vasska, and his face was very pale and his hands trembled

Peter scanned him mutely and replied:

"Vasska, if you would ask for my cows, pigs and Anna I would not hesitate to give them. You are a man whom we would like to have at Lamovoi, for you would write and read our letters, play the concertina and sing. Anna would not have any objection to you. Isn't that so?"

Anna looked from her father to Vasska, blushed and murmured:

"Vasska is a man whom our cows and pigs would like, and no dog in Lamovoi barks at him. I have conversed and danced with him and know that he is worthy of any maid at Lamovoi."

"Are you in earnest? Would you give me both the pink cows, both of last year's pigs, the new red carriage, the two suits of clothes and Anna?" asked Vasska with an excited voice, grasping Peter's hand. Anna smiled and blushed once more.

"Gladly, Vasska," replied Peter. "Well, Vassili and Filip, have your horses harnessed and let us drive to the priest. I think it is not necessary to waste any more time on this subject. I would like to get rid of my cows, pigs, red carriage and Anna. The priest knows how to join man to woman and we know how to celebrate the wedding ceremony."

"A marriage, the marriage of Vasska and Anna!" roared the children outside.

"I am happy—so happy," spoke Vasska, with glowing eyes, looking out of the window at the cows and the pigs in the street which were soon to be his property. Anna rushed to dress herself and to get ready the two suits of clothes. Peter in the meanwhile approached Vasska and said:

"Vasska, write a good and strong reply to that man whose letter you read us. You know how to write. Say that my cows, pigs and other things are disposed of. I would not give anything through a letter to a man like him. You might also add that after finishing the writing you will be the owner of them all. Curse him as heavily as you know how."

Vasska smiled and hesitated. Peter and all the other men of the village insisted that Vasska should write immediately. After a pause Vasska rose from his seat and said:

"It is not possible to write him, for I myself am the fool who sent the letter and picture. A week ago I mailed the letter and waited the reply. But the reply did not come and I could not longer wait for the answer so I came personally, but my letter had arrived at the same time. The letter and the picture which you condemned were mine."

"Ugh, all the saints be praised! exclaimed Peter crossing himeslf. All the people in the assembly shouted also:

"That's incredible! Impossible! Oh, God be gracious."

"Vasska, is that really your letter and picture? Is it not much wiser to get married without a

letter?" said Anna, who had meanwhile returned, dressed for the ceremony.

'I think Vasska is joking, and we must not believe his jokes," said Tatiana, laughing.

Filip who had taken the letter and smelled it, said:

"It has the smell of the devil's fingers. It is surely not written by Vasska. You may all smell it."

Everyone was curious to smell it, for it was perfumed with an odor which nobody in the village had ever smelled. After the letter and picture were smelled by everybody Maria seized them and threw them out into the yard. At this the pigs, which were to be Anna's wedding gift, got frightened and ran away as fast as they could.

"Look!" exclaimed Filip. "The pigs don't like them. They can smell the wrong from the right. No more letters to Lamovoi. We don't need them."

The people laughed and joked and started to drive to the church. In a few hours the church was filled. Anna and Vasska stood with happy faces and crowned heads before the altar. The priest solemnly read the marriage sermon. The guests thought of the wedding, the meal and the vodka; Anna's mind was busy with the letter

and the two new suits of clothes; but Vasska's thoughts turned toward the cows, the pigs and the new red carriage.

Studies of Modern Man

Modern industrial civilization has developed the intellect and imagination of man, at the expense of his heart and conscience.

THE EMPTY GRAVE

ONE beautiful morning, in July, I decided to take a trip up the Hudson. Weary of the noisy and exciting life of the Metropolis, I longed for solitude and nature.

On the way, as the boat passed an unusually picturesque spot, I was attracted by an old country church overlooking the river. As I was in quest of the unusual I resolved to disembark at the next landing, and, if possible, to find my way back to this spot, which I did.

The situation of the old Dutch church and of its wild cemetery was altogether romantic. As I walked slowly between the tombstones, I began to read, mechanically, the various epitaphs. Being somewhat depressed, the thoughts that they called up in me gave me a perverse enjoyment. I wondered if the dead who were buried there ever thought of the epitaphs with which their posterity had sought to honor them. "I am such and such. I will this and that," they had said to themselves while they lived; but what do they say now? Will I also be buried under the cold dumb earth, far from life and those whom I loved?" I asked

myself, shivering. Under the spell of such emotions I moved along dreamily, as if to sad music. Everywhere were the same grey stones, the same mounds of earth; only the names and the epitaphs were different. And now among the older tombs I saw a new stone, which seemed somehow to be different from the others; something unusual in the lettering caught my eye.

What I saw startled me.

"An Esthonian epitaph? What? Is it possible?" I said, reading it again:

"Ado Kaleva, sündinut lehe kuu 17, 1870. Räpinas, uputas iseenast Hudsoni, lehe kuu 27, 1908," which put into English is:

"Ado Kaleva, born May 17, 1870, at Rapin, drowned himself in the Hudson, May 27, 1908."

It was a very curious co-incidence. I knew Esthonian, a language of Mongolian origin, which was spoken only in the Russian Baltic Provinces, by a small nation of less than a million people.

"Who was the man and how came he to be buried here, so far from his country, and why did he commit suicide?" I thought, becoming more and more interested. "Was he the hero of some romance or tragedy? I must find out something about his personality."

I resolved to call on the sexton or on someone

who could tell me more about the grave and its occupant. Seeing a small house and a garden near the church, I walked thither. From behind the church a dog came toward me, barking, and in the garden I noticed a grey-haired old man, digging busily. I accosted him and asked if he was the sexton and if he could give me some information about the grave of the Esthonian.

He was a little man, stooped and gnarled, with an expression of kindly shrewdness in his grey eyes. He tilted his hat back from his forehead, leaned on his shovel and, looking up at me, replied:

"Yes, I'm the sexton. Come to visit his grave, eh?"

I told him that I was simply an excursionist and had merely chanced upon the tombstone. The old man seemed disappointed and looking at me, somewhat doubtfully, answered:

"Well, it 'pears as though that fellow was a man of mystery, sure enough. I don't know as how I can tell you any more about him than what he left written on some papers that night he jumped off into kingdom come, by way of that dark water down there. God bless his poor soul! You see he had been staying here with me for a couple of weeks before it happened. About a

month after his disappearance I received a letter —that was just signed "From a Friend"—containing a check and the request that a stone be put up for him even if the body was not recovered. Well, I had the stone cut and put up all right, at the head of an empty grave; for nary a sight did I catch of the poor young gentleman's body after that night, tho' we searched the shore and kept a sharp lookout for the body farther down the river."

"Possibly the man repented of his attempt and was rescued," I said.

"Well, mebbe so; some sech thoughts kept a comin' into my head for awhile, although it ain't likely; for, says I to myself, he 'peared to be mighty fond of us around here, and if any one had hauled him out and his mad feelings had been cooled off by that wetting, I'd think he would a come back and let us know—knowin' as how we'd be feeling pretty broke up about it. There was somethin' kind a loving about the chap."

"Tell me something more about him," I urged, "how he happened to come here, or——"

"Well, I just saw him one mornin' wandering around, reading off the titles on the headstones to himself, same as you was doin' yourself. When he saw me he smiled kind of sad and said some-

thin' about its being poetical and restful here, or some sech remarks.

"Yes, I says to him, the folks as settle here ain't called on to do much else but rest.

"He only smiled that sad smile of his and then after wanderin' around a little more he comes up to me again and asks if I knew anyone around the neighborhood as would take him to board for a week or so.

"I knew that my old woman had a tidy little room in the house there that nobody was gettin' much use out of, so I asks him to come into the house and talk it over with Mary.

"She fell to lovin' him right off; so the upshot was that he goes off for an hour or two and comes back with a small trunk in a wagon and stays with us, 'till he goes off over the bank there. But you wait here and I'll go fetch them papers he left. They will tell you a lot about him and I don't see as there is any harm in showin' them to anyone as has a kind feeling for the poor lad."

During the conversation we had walked toward the Esthonian grave and the sexton left me standing there while he went to get the papers.

The simple headstone with its strange inscription stood at the head of a level undug grave. How strange it seemed! The melancholy state of mind in which I had been for some time made

me strangely sympathetic to this unknown man's sorrow. I, too, had sometimes thought of oblivion under cool, dark waters; but always with the half sardonic smile of a man who knows he will see the game to a finish, come what may.

The drowsy murmur of a summer afternoon pervaded the place. The honest grey rocks rose up protectingly around this little garden of sleep. The gentle tolerance for all humanity living or dead, that one feels in such a spot, came over me.

"A mighty good cut in that stone, don't you think so?" spoke the sexton, coming up behind me suddenly with the papers in his hand. "A man ought to get the worth of his money in a stone. And as I says to Mary, tho' the poor lad ain't there to get it, it's a comfort to us to know we did the best we could by him."

I took the papers and a curiously carved silver locket containing a photograph, from his hand.

"Is this all?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "There may a bin more of it, but I reckon he destroyed it. This we found all crumpled up in his room. And this picture down by the water's edge yonder, the mornin' after. Seemed as though he must a dropped it before goin' in or it floated ashore afterwards."

"What other proof have you that he really jumped into the river?" I asked.

"Well, his own words, in that writing there are about proof enough and then there was his hat and stick and a book he was always a carrying around with him, and some foot prints—a goin' in that direction, but not a comin' back.

"But now, I'll leave you alone while you do your readin'—I've got to see to a burying in that plot over there in a few minutes. Poor old Jim Sands is due here then. He did love his dollars when he was alive! And he had lots of 'em, too. I went to him once when we were mighty hard put for some repair in the place here, but it wa'nt no use. 'Well,' says I to him, 'Jim, I won't come to you any more—you will come to me.' And now there he comes, just as I said. Well, God bless him, he was a good fellow, if you let his pockets alone."

The sexton left me and I sat down by the headstone to read the diary of this life story. First I took a look at the photograph. The face of an alluringly beautiful woman looked back at me, arousing within me something that hardly seemed a memory, but a kind of haunting recognition. Very much perplexed, I turned to the writing; but ever as I read, the woman's face seemed watching me. I read as follows:

ESTHONIA, RÄPIN, April 19, 1906.

Today I closed a contract with Mr. Vannovsky,

the manager of the Imperial Opera House for the rôles of Demon, Mephisto and Barber of Sevilla. One thousand rubles an evening. My term begins October 1st. I have a strange feeling. It seems as if the engagement is an illusion. May be it is merely a dream—a phantasy? But I have the contract with the seal of the Imperial Opera House. As I have been until now only a poor journalist, a starving student of music—I still ask myself: Is it possible? Or is it only a dream? Oh, ambition, to thee I owe all my success! Indeed, ambition is the lash of the will. I am tired and excited; good night!

October 2, two o'clock at night.

I have returned from my first performance. I sang the Mephisto. The stormy enthusiasm and the roaring da capos of the audience still hum in my ears. I am dazed, happy and satisfied. My hand trembles; the fashionable gowns and glittering uniforms, the enthusiastic faces and beaming eyes wave hazily before my eyes. This is real life—rapture, enjoyment, success. I will sleep, if I can. Onward!

January 15.

I have made my career. A dinner was given to me at Palkin's by my admirers. I sang five songs—was applauded and flattered. It seems that to get ovations, to be applauded and admired

is fast becoming my second nature. How I have changed since the first of October! It is not merely the music, but the elegance, the refinement, the luxury that now captivates my soul. The dinner was exquisite, the champagne was excellent; and oh! how much more elegant is this society than that of the Bohemian circle of poor students and journalists of that long ago. I hate poverty; I hate my gloomy past. I am grateful to my ambition. Ambition—I have it still—not as it was—but different, I have now a different ambition. There is nothing more fascinating, nothing sweeter than the love of a beautiful woman. My audience is full of such surprises—my new ambitions! Such is life.

February 6.

Who is she? She sent me the most beautiful bunch of roses. On the card in the roses she had written with pencil, and evidently in a trembling hand: "If you can understand the talk of these roses you will know the dumb whisperings of my heart. Your most devoted admirer." I think I saw that very bouquet in the hand of a heavily veiled lady in the Imperial Lodge. But I may be mistaken. The eyes of this mysterious one are the very eyes which have already bewitched me. I have seen her several times, gazing at me from the audience. It

must be she who sent me the flowers. However, I am not certain. But who? Who?

February 21.

I saw her again in an elegant Imperial sled on the Nevsky. I recognized her by her eyes and nodded a slight greeting. She smiled very sweetly. I think she loves me. How shall I get her?

February 27.

I have seen her again. She was in the audience. It seemed to me that she blushed when I gazed at her. Her eyes spoke to me and mine answered. She seems to know that I love her. But how can I meet her? I will try to see her in the hall, immediately after the next performance. Oh, I am so thirsty for her whispering lips, for her radiant eyes and trembling touch. For her I would sacrifice all—yes, my soul. She is my sole ambition. I will, I shall meet her. Hope. Strive. Per aspera at astra!

April 13.

At last I have met her. She is, indeed, a mysterious goddess. "Who are you?" I asked her on the dark street, as she entered her carriage. "I am your devoted admirer," she whispered in reply, "and you can meet me the first Easter night in the Cathedral of St. Kazan, near the third pillar from the main entrance. Black veil with

silver stars. Au revoir." She reached me a small hand and I shivered with happiness. I know that she loves me and she knows that I love her. But —knowing does not satisfy me. I must have her, have her as I have my music. She must be my wife.

The first Easter night.

Oh, love, thou sweetest nectar of life! When shall I have enough of thee? I have seen her. I entered the illuminated cathedral, which was filled with the people, who upon this night, as is our custom, go to kiss each other with a holy kiss after the priest has declared that Christ is risen. I noticed the many couples, looking at each other in anxious expectation of that moment when they could kiss under the sanction of religion. I looked about and beheld a veiled lady standing alone near the third pillar. A black veil with silver stars hung down from her hat. It was she, and I trembled. She extended me her hand in greeting. Did I say hand? It was the lightning. I never had felt such a shock—never. Love, the divine inspiration which she now offered me had always before been to me an unknown music. It was a sealed world and now a breath had broken that iron seal. We stood silent as the statues as we pretended to listen to the ceremony of the Holy Night. In reality, in

our imagination we were adrift on the surface of a dreamy sea. We listened only to the voice of our passions. The choir was singing. It was not a mere song of earth, but a heavenly music from a better world. The hymn, the soft harmonious voices of hundreds melted into one, and the solemn surroundings, made the place seem like Heaven. The song ended in a most delicate pianissimo, and as we heard the dying echo, like a whisper of the wind, sigh its heart out in the alcoves, the priest chanted solemnly: "Christ is risen. Glory to God!" "It is more than beautiful, it is heavenly," she said. I was unable to reply. I only gazed at her mutely. And as the people kissed each other, murmuring: "Christ is risen," her hand seemed to seek mine. She came so near that her shoulder touched me and I felt her head sink slowly, as if she would whisper in my ear. Then as her tender cheek touched my own, I heard, like a murmur of the wind:

"I love you."

And I echoed:

"I love you," and, taking advantage of the custom, I kissed her solemnly.

"Sweetheart, when can I have you!" I asked in a low voice. "Never, never, my love. I think I must go," she replied and then once more she kissed me. As she entered her carriage, she

pressed my hand and said in a low voice: "I hope soon to see you. Sleep sweetly, my love." "Who are you?" I asked. "Forever yours," she answered. And that is all. Who is she? A fata morgana? Would to God I knew.

April 25.

I saw her again. She smiled. It was so sad. In her lips I read something sweet and mournful, while her eyes drank mine. She threw me a bunch of roses within which was this terrible note:

"Dear Sweetheart: The demons have discovered our love. Danger threatens us. If you will, to save our lives, leave the country.

"Your Illusion."

On the other side was written:

"Write to me: Russalka, General Post Office. Poste restante."

I shuddered, and rushed out to meet her, but she was gone. Returning home from the opera, two dark figures followed me. Spies—I think. Oh, this is awful! I feel impelled to follow her entreaty. Who can she be?

April 26. Eight o'clock, A. M.

A sleepless night. A terrible morning. I know not what to do. Shall I leave my career—my ambition? The air seems full of narcotic fumes, the walls of my room sneer at me and

everything is upside down. I try to sing—to play something beautiful. In vain. I can see only grinning demons. I am a wreck. However, I will not flee, tonight. I will appear as Mephisto. I am not a criminal to leave the country in this foolish manner. Hope. Courage.

Twelve o'clock at night.

I am desperate. Oh, demons why do you persecute me! I played Mephisto as I had never played it before. The audience sobbed. I felt the hell in my soul. Today the same two dark figures shadowed me everywhere. Spies? No doubt. Leaving the Opera House a nun accosted me on the street and handed me a small holy picture perfumed with the oil of roses. To the picture was attached this fatal note:

"Sweetheart, why don't you follow the warnings of one who loves you more than anything else on the earth? If you remain a day longer, death will have us both. Flee!

"Your desperate Russalka."

I know from the handwriting that it is from her. Awful. It seems I must flee. Oh, God! I shall try to sleep for a few hours.

April 28.

Here I am. My career, my ambition, my success—everything is in ruins. I am a fugitive from my country. Why? Was I fooled by a

fata morgana? Maybe it was nothing but an hallucination. No, no. It is a fact. I am now on board of a steamer to Stockholm. But what can I do there? But where? America? The name sounds so appealing. The freedom of the New World allures me. America—it shall be.

May 3.

I am on the steamer to New York. My soul is sobbing and desolate. Haunting visions torment me. I wrote a long letter to her from Stockholm. Where is she? Is she saved?

May 6.

The weather is stormy. The steamer is creaking and groaning, and the passengers look like helpless worms for all their affectation of refinement. A seasick snob, with his fine clothes, looks to me more miserable than a poor tramp in his rags. I made the acquaintance of Mr. Howard, a fine young American. Simple, democratic, friendly, a little bit superficial and puritanic, but I like him very much. He invited me to be his guest in New York. His enthusiasm towards every new movement, his tendency to active and practical views, his love of sensational emotions, his boyish shallowness, democratic manners and admiration of heroic notoriety give me a glimpse of the American character. There is a wholesomeness and a refreshing

energy, which one feels to be lacking in the stagnant European. I would love that new life and would add my small share to its development. It seems to me that all the progressing souls of the Old World have to join the New. I hope that America will help me to forget my sorrows. Russalka, I shall try to forget you. I hope so. Oh, to throw off this tyranny of the past! Oh, for patience, strength, ambition!

May 18.

Hail, Soil of Heroes! I am now the guest of Mr. Howard, a rich banker. I am impressed by his manhood and energy, which is such as I have never seen in Russia. Such as he, are rarely found anywhere. Loved by his wife, his children and his employes, he loves them in return. The atmosphere of this family pulses with the harmony of the universal music. Their looks, their gestures, their voices and manners—oh, how pleasing and benevolent! America, this is your wealth, your glory, your future. Let me be one of them. I will.

October 5.

I have been studying the life and the language of the Americans. After my visit to Mr. Howard had ended. I decided to again earn my living as a singer. I, therefore, sought out an important operatic

manager and told him of my intention. I asked him to hear me. I showed him the appreciations of the greatest musical critics of my country. "I am sorry," he began, staring at me coldly, "we engage only European celebrities who are already famous in this country. You see, that is our strict rule, and I never engage anybody here." This was an American of a different type from Mr. Howard. A snob, who grovelled before the opinions of his audience—a perfect automaton of conventionalism!

October 23.

I have seen five of the biggest New York musical managers. I tried to arrange a tour of recitals. "To boom a singer costs from five to ten thousand dollars. If you have that amount, I shall be glad to take up the matter," replied the first. "But I am an artist of reputation and would win the appreciation of any audience. Can't you make a more reasonable arrangement?" I asked him. "Very sorry, my time is too valuable," he replied, indicating, that if I had not that amount of money, it would not be possible to have a career in America. It was the same with the others. Are then the tongues of those American artists doomed to eternal silence, who lack the dollars to advertise themselves? Is the boom the measuring-scale of American music? Is art

dominated by receipts? Has any corporation the right to control and to counterfeit the beautiful? Is this the America of fact? How fine she was when I first saw her, and now how different, how grotesque!

November 12.

I have written some essays on the subject of art and have been with them to the offices of the leading magazines to find a publisher. "Very sorry, we did not find your articles available," was the unanimous reply of all those literary periodicals. One of the editors told me that he really would not care to publish anything which was not in the line of his commercial, conventional and political interests. Authors and artists are all in the grasp of the Octopus of Commercialism. Schopenhauer, Hugo, Tolstoi and Robert Louis Stevenson are handled like Standard Oil, and the other monopolies. To sell literature and art, one has first to make a corporation and water the stock. Then secure a pretty label and hand your product over to the grocer.

November 7.

After having failed in my specialty, I one day met my friend Howard and told him of my troubles. "Why don't you try to be an actor?" he suggested. In order to help me Mr. Howard arranged a meeting with a prominent theatrical

manager at his house. I was introduced as "an actor with a European reputation." I was engaged at one hundred a week, as the lover in a melodrama. "Pure art is starvation," whispered my friend—Well, there you are!—I shall write to her. Her memory is like a romantic dream. Where are you my sweet Russalka? I shall write you of my strife and bitterness. Russalka, your face still haunts me! Activity, new surroundings, cannot sweep you out of my heart.

November 23.

I have entered my new profession. I played very badly, but the audience seemed to be fool enough to applaud like a crowd of children. The more unnatural I was, the more they seemed to be pleased. Much noise, much action. No emotion, no soul. Only obvious sensations appeal to them. Yet I must live.

January 28.

I made a new contract at five hundred a week. I am selling my soul for money. It seems that in America to do one's best is to starve. It's no use to fight alone—my art, my beloved! For thee Russalka, I have lost all. I have written three letters to her, but no reply. I have written everything. I am ashamed of my new self. But one must sacrifice his soul if he wishes to be successful. So it seems.

February 8.

A letter from her. My hands tremble. Opening it I read:

"My dearest—I suffer. O love, I wish I never had seen nor heard you! You seem to have cut out your heart, but my heart is growing bigger. Your theatrical success does not please me. I wish that the Americans could hear your heavenly voice, your fascinating songs. I wish I could fly to you from out my iron cage and break these jeweled chains. I am alive, but very unhappy.

"God help you. Russalka."

March 20.

I am making money, but am ruining my health and destroying my æsthetic conscience. I am surrounded by a shallow world of tawdry successes. It eats into my soul like a burning acid. It makes me a nervous wreck. How glad would I be to live again the life of the poor journalist, of the poor student of music. Oh, for the Bohemianism of long ago! Is this civilization? No, it is not civilization. It is corruption, degeneracy. Mr. Howard and his ideal family are the only consolations of my soul. They are America as I wish it. There are heroes here, but they are dominated by their oppressors. Oh, I hate this life. I hate still more the Old World.

I lack the will to make a fight against this rotten art.

April 2.

Heavens, this is terrible! I wish I could pull myself together, and get out of this jungle of souls. Yet, if one realizes that he lacks the vigor of fight, it is sweeter to die. I may end by drowning myself. I would love to die in the waves and to live all in one moment the joys of that sweetest Easter Night. Life is suffering. The more one is educated, the more he suffers. I am worn out by my past sufferings. I can endure it no longer. Death? It is only a transition to another existence. To die for a reason, for an ideal, is all right. I will think it over. Oh, this agony!

Easter Night.

The haunting memory of her mysterious love emerges like a lamenting song. When I imagine that heavenly choir in the Kazan Cathedral and those dark eyes, those sweet kisses and those trembling caresses, and compare them with the prosaic noise of this theatre life, these brutal figures on the stage, I shudder! I hear their laughter, but it is not the laughter of nature, but metallic like gold. Money is the god here. I hate it. I would rather be dead. But to die in these noisy surroundings. I, who loved solitude

and quiet? Never! I shall see Mr. Howard, shall say that I am going away and say good-bye forever.

May 12.

I chanced upon this wild poetic cemetery, and it appeals to me. I am stopping with the old sexton, and am preparing for my last moments. I still pray and struggle against this tragic idea, but it comes and overpowers me. It is a mania. Anyhow, I don't care. I shall leave a letter to be mailed to her, informing her of the place of my last breath. I will die in the whispering waves of this beautiful river. My last words shall be:

"Art, Russalka—I love you. I die for you!"

Life is a fight of intellect against stagnation and sensuality. It should not be a burden. Farewell.

ADO KALEVA.

When I finished reading, it seemed as if I heard the beautiful voice of the melancholy singer in my ears. The unusual narrative affected me deeply and the woman's eyes in the picture seemed to look at me mockingly, bidding me revive the memory that I felt within me. How tantalizing a memory can be sometimes!

I was absorbed in the picture when the old sexton's voice aroused me.

"Well, have you read it? Peculiar, ain't it?

But I tell you he was a fine fellow—if you had only heard his voice!"

"What did the man look like?" I asked, a light suddenly dawning within me.

The old man leaned on the headstone and stroked his chin, thoughtfully, as though better to recall the likeness.

"He was a slim, dark young fellow with a mighty fine genteel way about him—looked as though he'd like to be lively and happy, but something was hurting him inside and keeping him from lettin' loose. Had a pretty bad scar on his left cheek and——"

"Wait," I exclaimed, excitedly, "I have it! Now I know where I've seen this woman's face before. Did the man have long hair?"

"Yes, he did—it always looked like it needed cuttin', according to my notion. But do you mean to say you've seen him since that night? For God's sake, tell me what you mean."

"Yes," I replied. "One night, a few months ago in Europe, while I was sitting in the garden of the hotel in a little town in Germany, a man and a woman came in and sat down at a table near me. The woman was facing me, but I could not see the man so plainly, as his back was toward me the whole time. In fact, I did not pay much attention to him, but now that the

scene comes back to me, I dimly recollect observing at the time that he had a bad scar on one side of his face; for he turned his profile my way several times. But the woman's face held me spellbound. I thought at the time I had never beheld a more charming expression. It was the face of a woman who would dare anything for love. And the face was the same as this in the photograph. I feel sure of it—the same languid, melancholy droop of the eye-lids. One cannot forget a face like that."

The old sexton looked at me, incredulously, and shook his head; but suddenly a light came into his eyes, and he grasped my arm, exclaiming:

"And I didn't tell you about the flowers that used to come for three months, did I? Every week a beautiful harp made of fine cut flowers—a fresh one every week. The florist that left 'em didn't have nothing to say, except that they had been ordered for Mr. Kaleva's grave. They was just about as mysterious as the money that came for the headstone and a tidy sum for me, for my troubles. But it 'pears to me the rich lady did the sendin' and the reason they stopt comin' so sudden was—"

"Why, of course, of course," I broke in, too impatient to wait for him to finish, "the lovers

had met by that time and everything had been explained. He went back to Europe, she met him, and—and—he decided not to run away from the joys the gods offered a second time."

"Yes, that's it," said the old man; but after a minute he shook his head. "Mebbe so, but 'taint likely, 'taint likely," he added, shaking his head. "I think he would a let Mary and me know."

We both looked at the grave stone beside us. The stone was entirely in shadow now, for the late afternoon sun was driving long, spectral shadows over the old graves. The ripples of the big, peaceful river caressed the shore innocently, as though incapable of any dark secrets. It would tell us nothing. I realized that the day was dying and that my path lay back toward the haunts of life.

My midsummer day's dalliance among the romantic dead must come to an end.

Both the old man and I seemed to feel that the stranger's secret never would be revealed to us.

As I passed out of the gate, I turned and looked back with a sigh.

ABAZA

And I could hardly believe the evidence of my ears when in a strong lusty voice, the voice of a sailor, he sang a rollicking song of the sea.

ABAZA

Mr. Nicholas Abaza was one of the hardest men in St. Petersburg to interview, and there was a journalistic proverb, saying: God is high, the Czar is far, but Abaza is further than all. The managing editor of the paper on which I was a writer therefore, felt very happy because he had at last succeeded in making an appointment for an interview to which I was assigned, being directed to call on this, the richest merchant of St. Petersburg, in his office at Bolshaya Morskaya, at half past twelve P. M. the next day. The subject of my interview was to be on commercial and financial questions, in which Abaza was considered more competent than any other man in the empire; but in order to avoid direct questions on a subject on which he never had talked publicly, I was advised by my principal to use a certain diplomacy. I was to begin my interview with Abaza's rumored foundation of an institute for psychical research and spiritualistic experiments, and from this to turn indirectly to his business matters.

I knew Mr. Abaza as one of the richest

men in the city. Besides big estates in almost every agricultural province of the empire, he had a splendid mansion on the Neva, near the palace of the Grand Duke Vladimir. Besides all this, he owned mines in Ural and Caucasus, ships, railroads, banks and real estate, representing in all a fortune of scores of millions.

Entering the spacious office of the rich merchant, I found him sitting behind his desk, absorbed in a letter. He seemed to me a man of fifty, and was tall and slender, with dark dreamy eyes, a full black beard and a melancholy romantic face, while his manners and gestures were marked by decided coolness and dignity. I could see that the man before me was a prince of business, whose atmosphere breathed of transactions, speculations and millions. Having observed my entrance he asked me shortly to take a seat, while he continued reading his letter. He was scarcely ready to begin to talk with me, when a telephone call interrupted it, and having settled a little matter of fifty-seven thousand rubles over the wire he arranged his letters on his desk, glanced sharply at me and said:

"What can I do for you?"

I saw that he accounted for every minute of his valuable time, and at once I felt that my interview with him would be short and confined

strictly to his philanthropic line, and that no amount of diplomacy on my part would enable me to extract business opinions from this master of situations if he did not see fit to give them. I explained briefly that I desired to talk with him about the proposed institution for psychical research. Having listened to me, at first coolly, he seemed gradually to become more interested, and the eyes which looked at me seemed to change in expression. The glow of commercialism gave place to something different.

"An institution of that sort is a great novelty and would have great significance," began Mr. Abaza, looking out of the window from time to time, and then again at me. "The other day a superintendent of my estates in Kieff committed suicide. If I had known of his intentions I would not have let him do it for a hundred thousand rubles. My stable man recently killed his sweetheart on the street, because he suspected her of being in love with my coachman and now he has been sentenced to compulsory labor for fifteen years. Those are merely a few instances of many such cases. So you see, if I had known more about their souls, I would have acted differently toward them. I wish that the human soul could be analyzed and known as a surgeon knows the anatomy of our

body. Many troubles could be prevented, much good done, and our life would gain a firm foundation. I am very much interested in the idea of such institution, in which the depths and the heights of our inner world would be shown and the means of its cultivation studied."

As Mr. Abaza talked he seemed to become greatly interested and enthusiastic. The prince-philanthropist before me was a different type from the merchant-prince and the change was so apparent and sudden, that I wondered at it. I told him that psychology had always been a matter of deep interest to me and that I had written many stories along that line.

"I am pleased to hear that," he replied, smiling and leaning back in his chair. "I wish that you would dine with me at my house some day this week. We would discuss the subject more fully."

"I shall be glad to do so," I replied.

"Well, say Thursday evening, at half past five, if that's convenient to you. Bring some of your articles and we will have a nice time discussing this subject which I consider most important," said Mr. Abaza, twisting his beard.

But now, thinking that this affable mood might be favorable to the other object of my interview, I ventured a few questions on the matter of his colonization schemes and, on the stock market.

"There is a rumor that you have purchased all the caviar fisheries on the Volga," I said.

Immediately his expression changed. He turned toward his desk, and I could see that he was transformed into the man of precision and sharp cleverness. He did not look at me any more with the directness and intimacy I had felt a few moments ago, but there was that glance of distrust, which one feels in the manners of men, who have spent their lives in business offices.

"I have nothing to say on that subject," he answered in a sphinx-like voice. "I don't know anything of my future plans."

I felt embarrassed, more from the coldness of the tone than from the words themselves. A telephone call from the Department of Finance interrupted us for a few moments, and, hoping to hear something more, I kept my seat.

"I am sorry, I have nothing to say about my business affairs," said the rich man, in the same metallic voice. I was still thinking how to put the question to him in a new form, when he interrupted it, saying:

"I hope to see you Thursday evening."

It was a direct indication that my interview was ended. So bidding him good-day I left the

office, very much depressed at the failure of my interview.

Though I knew Abaza to be a very rich man, I was not prepared for the splendor I beheld when I entered his house the following Thursday. It was semi-oriental in its magnificance and rare objects from China and Japan, mingled with the great works of modern Russian sculptors and painters. The odor of burning wax-candles mixed with different kinds of Oriental incense, filled the atmosphere with a peculiar mystery. Servants, dressed in the costumes of the mediæval Russian Boyars, gave to the whole an impression of romanticism.

As I entered his Persian studio Mr. Abaza met me very cordially. There was not a trace of the business mask, of the coldness and shrewdness that he had worn in his office at Bolshaya Morskaya.

"The Orient is a fascinating riddle to me," he began, when I had taken a seat opposite to him, on the cushion before the fire place. "It is so symbolic and so deep. I feel sorry that I am an European. In our art and æsthetics we are photographers—copiers of things. Our art is too materialistic, while an Oriental symbolizes and interprets life in his art. Do you think

that reason is a more trustworthy guide in life than emotion?"

"I should think that emotions alone would not be able to direct us in our inner relation to outside conditions, but a combination of both emotion and reason would be necessary," I replied.

My host gazed into the fire meditatively and I watched his expression with keen interest. This was no longer the Abaza I had seen in the office, but a man interested in the deepest questions of art and science. We continued our conversation till the servant announced dinner.

Before entering the dining room, I met Mrs. Abaza, a tall handsome woman with black eyebrows, red cupid lips and classic features. She extended her white hand to me in greeting and smiled conventionally. I was seated opposite to her and therefore was able to observe her during the meal.

Mr. Abaza and I continued our talk on Oriental art and philosophy in which my hostess participated. I thought I discovered a certain sadness and aloofness in her manner toward her husband and it seemed that she glanced at him just as coldly as if he had been her business partner. Finally our conversation turned to music.

"Music is probably the most neglected of the Oriental arts," I said, looking at Mrs. Abaza.

"As to modern music, yes," began my hostess, "but the Oriental folk songs are very beautiful. They have a passion and romance of which there is no trace in the European song. It is so beautiful, that I am not able to hear it without suffering."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because, because—it hurts me, it tears me to pieces," she whispered, and I noticed how her eyes filled with tears, which she labored in vain to repress. I realized that I apparently had touched a very delicate chord in her nature. Mr. Abaza glanced at me and turned the conversation to a new subject, which I quickly took up. We began to speak of politics and social questions, and my hostess seemed relieved.

After the dinner she offered me her hand, saying that she was going to the opera. He bowed to her in an indifferent manner, and he and I walked to his studio. I wondered at the coldness of manner between them. Apparently she had all that her heart could wish, great possessions, money, social standing and a handsome and noble husband; but there seemed to be something strange in their relations, an aloof-

ness and lack of heart, that manifested itself under their coldly correct and almost courtly manners. It was evident that there was some sadness behind it all, but what it was, was, of course, carefully hidden.

At the request of my host, I read one of my articles on the subject of a double language, which, as I described it, we all speak simultaneously, the one with words, which are always controlled by our will and thoughts, and the other, a silent wordless language, which we speak intuitively in our likes and dislikes. This last is the language of our real self. My host became enthusiastic and more animated in his gestures than I had ever seen him before. He said that I was on the right track in my study of the human soul and he promised to assist me by giving me lots of material from his own experience.

When I left him late at night, his face had a hauntingly melancholy, the expression of a man consumed with longing.

Circumstances caused me to leave the city for over a year, and when I returned I had almost forgotten the rich Abaza and his handsome wife. A new vocation absorbed all my time, and I had no chance to see any one of my friends for some time after my return.

One morning, while reading a newspaper, I happened to read a story which at once attracted my attention. It was the story of an old sailor, Pavloff, who had been arrested for some sort of disturbance in a restaurant. Pavloff had told, in the police station, that at one time he had been the cook on a steamer of which the rich Abaza had been the captain, and he claimed to know how he, Abaza, had begun his career of success. His story interested me greatly and I decided to call on the prisoner and have a talk with him, which I did. I knew the police captain and the judge in the district in which the sailor was arrested, so I was almost sure that they would enable me to meet him. I succeeded in giving bail for the unfortunate fellow and, having released him from the prison, I invited him to take lunch with me in a restaurant, which invitation he gladly accepted.

During the meal he insisted upon telling me in detail all the story of his arrest which he said was caused by his comrade Hans who had left him in the lurch, but finally I brought him around to the subject of the rich Abaza.

"You mean my old principal Nicolas?" muttered Pavloff, emptying his glass of beer. "He was a fine chap when he was poor. But money has put him in a bad fix. I know it."

"What bad fix do you mean?" I queried, offering him a drink. "I don't know anything of the origin of his wealth."

Rubbing his weather-beaten face, reminiscently, and gazing around the room suspiciously, he began:

"I've known Abaza since he bought 'Lastotchka,' a second-hand iron freight steamer, which made its irregular tours between Astrakhan and the Persian coast of the Caspian Sea. You see, Abaza was the son of a Caucasian prince, whose estates were for some reason confiscated by the government. Semen, a saloon-keeper in Baku, told me that Abaza had to earn his living as a farmer, near his place for many years; I don't know how he got hold of the steamer. I suppose he inherited it from a relative. Poor and ambitious as he was, he naturally wanted to make money, and I suppose dreamed of adventures as everyone of us does in his time.

"Well, one day, at Balfarush, in Persia, where we were unloading a cargo of cotton, we were approached by a young Persian—his name was Uliano, or something like that, who offered us a large sum of money if we would convey him and his wife, with several hundred bags of coffee, which he had stored in a warehouse there, at once to Astrakhan. I took him to our captain and

after having talked the matter over alone, Abaza agreed to the man's request. As I saw how anxious the man was and how suspicious he was of everything, I inferred that he was a refugee of some sort, though I did not dare to inquire. That night, after the bags had been conveyed in the hold of the ship, we cast off our moorings and began the journey.

"The wife, who had come on board, covered with a veil, and clad in a long robe of Persian wool, kept in her cabin, while the husband nervously walked the deck till long after midnight. Early the next morning, he came to me in great excitement and, pointing at a small object on the dim horizon, said, wringing his hands:

" 'I suppose we are being followed.'

"Eh? Who should follow us? We often see such sights on the sea," I replied, to console him.

"Looking through the glass, I discovered a small Persian gun-boat some thirty miles to the rear. It was then that the fellow went to Abaza and told him a strange story. He said, that having refused to give up his beautiful wife to the Shah, he had been accused of various political crimes and persecuted until, to save her, he at last determined to flee from Persia to Russia. They both were Christians who had loved each

other for many years. Their marriage had been performed only the night before their escape. We did everything in order to calm the man, saying, that if the gun-boat should overtake us, we could stow him and his bride somewhere in the hold until the search, if such was made, was over."

The old sailor paused and looked out of the window of the restaurant, as if to recollect something, while I asked him if he wanted something else.

"A glass of vodka might revive my memory, I suppose," he stammered. Having ordered the vodka, he smiled sadly and continued:

"As it was apparent that the gun-boat was gaining on us every minute, we felt sure that we were indeed pursued. The captain at once ordered the engineer to do his best and went down to his cabin to tell the Persian that we had prepared a good hiding place. But he probably supposed that the pursuers would find him on board anyhow, and take him back to Persia. I don't know what he said to Abaza. However, I know that the poor refugee was not interested in the saving of his own life, but it was the fate of his veiled wife, which filled him with sorrow. I suppose Uliano's face was dark as the night, when he asked Abaza if he knew a method to

save her life, in case he, her husband was dead or captured. Nicholas probably replied that he would think it over, which he did. Having discussed the poor chap's trouble with Ignaty and me, Abaza called the Persian and told him that there was one possibility.

"'What is that,' he exclaimed, hopefully.

"'It is,' began Abaza, sadly, 'something terrible. Your wife could be saved if she would marry someone on board of a Russian ship; for so, according to international law, she becomes the subject of that empire. No Persian official would dare to touch her as a Russian subject on board of a Russian ship.'

"'Heaven be praised!' shouted the man joyfully like a boy, shaking our hands vigorously. His gloomy face brightened and we felt happy with his happiness. After a pause, he looked at Abaza, seriously, and asked:

"'Mr. Abaza, will you save her? Say, will you marry her? She can be your wife all her life, if she likes you. Or she can get a divorce in Astrakhan. Will you become her husband?'

"Nicolas became very serious, pondered the question for several minutes and replied:

"'Mr. Uliano, I promise that anything I can do, in order to save her life, I will do it.'

"Uliano embraced Abaza and kissed him like a brother. Then he left us and we began to make preparations for the wedding ceremony. Ossip, his assistant, was to be the minister and I with Mikhail, our engineer, were to be the witnesses.

"That was the last time I saw the Persian, for in half an hour he was dead in his cabin, having poisoned himself. 'Save my wife—' were his last words, which Abaza heard him mumbling before he died. On the table he found a letter, which was to be handed to his widow after he was dead, and another letter, in which he willed to his wife all his effects. Being a Christian, Uliano was willing to do anything to save his wife from falling into the hands of a Mohammedan, who was also his enemy.

"Abaza sent me down to his wife. I went to her cabin and, in response to my knock she appeared without her veil. Having expected to see her husband, it was with some dismay, as well as embarrassment, that she beheld me. She was tall and strikingly handsome, with a dazzling white complexion and large black eyes. Seeing by my face that I was the bearer of sad tidings, she exclaimed:

"'What is it? My husband—what has happened?'

"Speaking some Persian, I was therefore able, after I had conveyed my news, to speak some words of comfort to the poor woman, who, now forlorn, sobbed as if her heart would break. I did not deem it advisable to tell how her husband died, but let her believe that it was of apoplexy. Having told her that we were pursued by the Persian gun boat I then returned to the deck and she staggered to see her dead husband. The gun boat was less than twenty miles away and it seemed that we should have to submit to the search, which we dreaded. But fortunately a storm was brewing, for the wind had become a gale and the northern sky was blind as night.

"After half an hour I went again to the weeping widow and explained that we had to bury the body in the sea. I handed her also the last letter which her husband had written, before he died. It was a letter in his own handwriting, in which he probably asked her in order to save her from the Shah to become the wife of our captain. She took it tremblingly, listened to me and gazed at his body like a petrified statue. She sobbed something, but I understood it was her consent to everything.

"Well, after we had buried the body, we had still to perform the marriage ceremony. We did everything as fast as we could. I never can forget the gloom in her face when she stood beside her groom, whom she had only seen since she arrived on board of our Lastotchka. It was not a marriage of love, but one of compulsion. I still see in my imagination that moment when Ossip announced them wife and man. It was a sad wedding, the saddest I ever have seen. In four or five hours the Persian gun boat ordered us to submit to a search, which we did. The Persian officials were not a little surprised when they found that the refugee was buried in the sea and his wife married to a Russian subject. As they had no legal rights on the vessel, they left us alone. In two days we arrived in Astrakhan and Abaza immediately sold Lastotchka, sold the coffee of the Persian and opened big business offices in Astrakhan and in St. Petersburg. Ossip told me a story, that among the coffee was one sack, which contained piles of precious diamonds, but I don't know how much truth there is in that. I do not know if Abaza told his wife everything that he had promised Uliano. I've only heard that there is a fence between their love—something insurmountable. But you know

family life is a private affair, and it's a shame to soil it with our curiosity. Don't you think so?"

The old sailor became silent and gulped down his vodka.

"But have you not visited your former captain?" I asked after a pause.

"No. He is a rich man. I am a poor sailor. What's the use of mixing the two things. He is hidden in his houses or offices and none of his employes would ever let a tramp like me see their dignified master. I don't mind. Such is life. If I would be able to write him a letter, I would do it, and I suppose he would be glad to hear from me. But it's better not to disturb a man while he counts his money."

Being satisfied with what I had heard, I bade farewell to the old sailor and left him ruminating on his past in the restaurant.

Several months passed, and I was not able to call on Mr. Abaza.

It was in September, that I had occasion to go to Southern Siberia, where I wished to found a colony. I was stopping at Barnaul, a small town near the Chinese frontier, when one day, while passing through the spacious square of that place, I noticed a Siberian farmer in the semi-barbarian costume of that vicinity, whose face seemed strangely familiar. He came toward me,

holding in his hand a small basket of eggs. I regarded him attentively, but I was not at once able to think of whom his face reminded me.

Suddenly his eyes met mine, and it appeared to me that they flashed a recognition, which at once the face seemed anxious to repudiate; for he set his lips firmly and, assuming a look of indifference, gazed straight ahead and walked past.

As he did so, the side-face instantly recalled the aquiline features of my old friend Abaza. But as I could not see how one of the richest men in St. Petersburg could at the same time be a poor Siberian farmer, I hesitated to accost him. But so striking was the resemblance and so deeply had it impressed me that, on second thought, I determined to follow the farmer and address him.

Having accelerated my steps, I was soon abreast of him and, after one more look at his features, I said:

"Pardon me, Mr. Abaza, but, seeing you here, I could not resist the impulse to accost you."

He stopped suddenly and gazing at me, as one awakening in terror from a dream, held out his hand and tried to speak. But what he said I was unable to understand, and had it not been for the fact that he trembled and seemed to labor in great excitement, I should have concluded that

I had been mistaken. At last he seemed to find himself, and as with a great effort said dreamily:

"Oh, I see, it's you Mr., Mr.—I have forgotten your name. How did you ever find this place? Very glad to see you."

"I suppose you've come to hunt?" I ventured to say, examining his costume.

"Yes, yes," he stammered, "quite right, quite right—hunting, hunting—game very plentiful, fine country."

But his words seemed to belie his thoughts, and at once he relapsed into silence, while on his face was that vacant look one so often sees on the faces of the insane.

"Quite right, quite right," he mumbled, shaking his head, and as he said no more the situation became embarrassing.

"As I am staying here for a day or two," said I, "it will give me great pleasure to have you join me at dinner in the inn."

"Impossible—I am sorry," he stammered in confusion, as if he had just found some guilty reason. "I must be going—good-day."

But I was resolved not to be shaken off so easily, so I accompanied him a way, explaining my colonization scheme, as I did so. Though he gave no evidence of interest, not a sign, for that matter, of having heard a single word, yet I felt

that by this means I could prolong our conversation until I discovered some clue to his strange behavior. But as he said absolutely nothing, I was as far from understanding the mystery as before. Hence I concluded that by continuing to walk beside him I should at last force him to speak, affecting all the while to be wholly oblivious of his embarrassment. At last, after some minutes of silence on my part, I said:

"Wonderful eggs, those, Mr. Abaza. What are they and where did you get them?"

This inquiry seemed to cause him great excitement and he looked at me with an angry glance, retaining the while, however, the same dull and vacant expression.

"I am selling them—fine eggs—swan eggs—have to sell them—" and then with abruptness: "Excuse me—I have much to do—good-day."

And he extended his hand. Of course, there was nothing for me to do, but to take it—but, just at that moment, a girl in a queer costume stepped out of a grocery store nearby and approached us, saying:

"Jacob, have you sold the eggs? I haven't a cent for the sugar, and we need flour, too." As she said this, she took his arm, smiling at me as she did so.

She was very pretty. Her red cheeks, deep

blue eyes and the expression of tenderness that hovered around her lips made her exceedingly attractive. She wore a cap of birch-bark adorned with wild roses and berries, and sandals of straw.

Meanwhile Abaza stood as if in a deep abstraction. He looked at me, then averted his eyes, and seemed to be in doubt what to do next. His companion, however, did not seem to notice his confusion, but said in a low voice:

"My dear, is this gentleman going to buy the eggs?" Then, without waiting for answer, turning to me, she said with enthusiasm: "Did my husband tell you that the eggs are fresh? They've all been laid within the last week. We have eight black swans—only three kopeks an egg—is not that cheap? They are big and delicious, aren't they, Jacob?"

This had been spoken so fast that Abaza had never a chance to interrupt her, and I was not sorry; for I felt that I had the clue to his mystery in my hand. He seemed to appreciate this and, making the best of the situation, said with a guilty shrug:

"Allora, this is my friend, Mr., Mr.—"

"Mr. Johns," I said, using the first fictitious name that came into my head.

"Mr. Johns, Mr. Johns," he stammered, "from

St. Petersburg. I just happened on him in the square." Then turning to me, he almost sobbed: "My wife, Allora."

Giving me her hand, she looked at me inquiringly, wondering, no doubt, why in my presence her husband should be so embarrassed. What turn things would otherwise have taken I am not able to guess; but, turning to me with a look of great cordiality and without waiting to see what effect it would have upon her husband, Allora said:

"Won't you be our guest, we live only a few miles from here and, as soon as we have sold our eggs, we shall go home. I am so glad to meet one of my husband's friends; for, in the three years in which I have known him, you are the only one I have seen. You will come—won't you?"

Of course, I was delighted with the turn things had taken, so before he could say anything I replied, hastily:

"I shall be very glad to go with you, and if you will allow me, I should be glad to buy the eggs as a souvenir of my trip."

She smiled, happy as a child; and, taking the basket out of his hands, she handed it to me. I paid over the ninety kopecs—to which Abaza, who now seemed to be much amused, made no

objection. Though the Abaza I had known before had always impressed me as a man of dominating personality, the new Abaza was evidently the very opposite. To every suggestion that his wife made, he yielded without a word of objection.

The journey of some five miles to the house of my friend lay through a pine forest. We walked the whole distance and on the way Allora chattered entertainingly of her household and her various possessions. She was even more enthusiastic about the baby, which she described lovingly in detail, from its golden head to its pink toes. Evidently she was very happy. She told me that they had just built a new house of three rooms.

"Jacob did it all by himself," she said, proudly. "Mother and I only helped now and then, when there was a log too heavy for him to lift."

All this while Abaza had been extremely taciturn. As this did not seem to surprise his wife, I concluded that this was here, as well as in St. Petersburg, his usual manner, but in this conclusion I was altogether wrong.

Finally, we arrived at a broad river, by the bank of which Abaza found a small row-boat. At this point his wife called my attention to a small island in the centre of the stream, probably

about a mile away. Toward this Abaza now began to row us with vigorous strokes; and I could hardly believe the evidence of my ears, when in a strong lusty voice, the voice of a sailor, he sang a rollicking song of the sea.

"What has come over the man?" I thought, not being prepared for this sudden change from extreme reticence to such jollity.

In about twenty minutes we were at the bank of the island, where we were welcomed by the joyful barking of a dog. As we walked up the path, hedged by roses, to the white door of the little cottage, we were met by a fine looking matron, who, I inferred, was the mother of the hostess. As I was introduced, she gave me a motherly smile; and she and her daughter at once disappeared into the house, from which the latter straightway emerged, laughing, with a baby in her arms. It was worthy of all the praise the mother had given it, and after I had held the crowing youngster a moment, the father tossed it up into the air, singing the while a lullaby with such loving intonation that I no longer recognized the care-worn Abaza of St. Petersburg.

I saw now that the whole island of four or five acres was a rose garden. In the centre there was a tiny lake, on which a dozen or more swans, some jet black and others white as ivory, were

floating with the grace which is their's alone. It was a little Paradise, an Eden of innocence and joy, truly a spot in which to forget the world.

My host, tall and handsome, stood amid the roses like a king among his subjects; and as he discussed the methods by which the oil of roses, by which they made their living, was extracted, it was hard to see in him the merchant prince whose ships sailed every sea.

He seemed so happy in this environment, so different from the man of thought and care I had known before, so much younger, that I dared not break the spell by an inopportune curiosity. I determined to let him say the first word, though I doubted that he would do so. He seemed utterly to have forgotten the old life and its splendor, the first wife and her claims.

Soon we were called in to a meal of bread, butter, milk and honey; but though frugal the fare and simple the service there was no lack of joy. I could see that these people were very happy, every look and word, every attitude and gesture seemed to be in tune with the inner harmony of their hearts. The secret of this I could divine very clearly. It was love. After the table was cleared and the dishes washed and set away in the small cupboard—a labor which husband and wife shared—Allora motioned to me with a

gesture, indicating that she would like to show me the island.

She, her husband and I, all went into the garden; but the explanation of the mystery which I expected from him, was not forthcoming. Very simply, in the manner of a peasant, he told me about his roses, the different varieties and methods of culture. Also he showed me his beehives, of which there were several dozens. The man, at no time, gave one sign that he knew that I knew his past. The old life had dropped from him like an old garment, and though I realized that he must be fifty, yet seeing him here, so careless and buoyant, I felt that he had become at least fifteen years younger.

On our return, at twilight, to the cottage, we found the wife and the mother sewing. The lamp was lighted and it cast a cheerful glow over the room, where in its cradle the baby lay slumbering peacefully. "Surely a domestic idyl," I thought, "and yet to what bitterness one word of mine could change it."

But of everything, save his domestic bliss, Abaza seemed absolutely oblivious. Pure contentment shone in his eyes, so that looking on him one would say: "Here is one who has kept himself unspotted by the world."

Our conversation—in which all joined—was in

keeping with the surroundings. Plans were made for the morrow, and now and then I was asked by both host and hostess for my opinion concerning this or that—such as whether it would be better to extend the cottage to the east or to the west, whether a porch at the front was after all not preferable to one at the side, whether—well, this will indicate the nature of the conversation. Not one word of the great world, nothing whatever about books, commerce, science, art or literature. And what was even more surprising was the genuine interest Abaza manifested in such simple questions. At last it was bed-time and, bidding all good-night, I ascended by a little ladder to the loft, where, I was told, I should find my bed.

This proved to be a blanket laid over some hay. Very comfortable it was, but I could not sleep. I could only think of the rich Abaza in the rôle of a poor farmer. I could arrive at no reasonable explanation of his self banishment, of this isolated life on a lonely island. If he wished to live here, millionaire that he was, could he not purchase every luxury? He was happy, no doubt of that; but love alone did not explain it. That he should grow weary of society and of his fashionable wife and should find in solitude and in this simple girl his happiness, was not so sur-

prising, as that he could be content to be—what he had undoubtedly become—a farmer himself—with apparently no love for, and no interest in the things which, while in St. Petersburg, were the concern and the ambition of his life. The more I thought, the less able was I to explain the mystery and at last I dropped to sleep. I do not know how long I had slept when the low voice of the mother of my hostess awakened me. I opened my eyes and it was still pitch dark. I asked her what she wished, and she replied:

"Mr. Johns, excuse me for disturbing you. My son-in-law, Mr. Jacob, has become sick and is very excited."

"What's the matter with him?" I asked, surprised.

"Oh, he's raving and says you're not Mr. Johns, not the man he knew, but says you're a ghost or God knows who. He's angry at himself, that he can't recollect your name. 'He is not Johns, I don't know such a friend,' he says and looks angry. I think if you will talk with him, he will be all right. Allora is afraid—foolish girl!" spoke the old lady, nervously.

I asked her the time and assured her that I would come down at once, at which she stammered:

"We have no watch. You see, we never had

money enough to buy a watch. But it will be getting light soon. The rooster crowed twice. I suppose it's near the dawn."

In a few minutes I descended and found Abaza walking in the room, holding his head in his hands. Having noticed me in the garden, he approached me mutely, extending his trembling hand. I could see that he was excited and tried to speak, but his words died to a mumbling whisper. I told him that I intended to leave him, explaining, that I had an important appointment in town very early in the morning. And though I could not help comparing him with the other Abaza, I respected his evident wish, in no way to be reminded of that other self, and I manifested so much sympathy with his excited behavior, that his face lighted with pleasure. Remembering that Abaza was a great smoker, I offered him a cigar. Looking at me blankly, as if he had never seen one before, he waved it away, rather roughly, I thought, saying:

"I never smoke."

Fearing that my presence might excite him again, I hastily bade him farewell. But he accompanied me to the shore. As I was already in the boat, he followed me, and then, seizing the oars, without once looking back, and with set face, he rowed silently toward the shore. When, without

exchanging a word, we reached the shore, I told him I would not trouble him to accompany me back to the town, at which he seemed much relieved. Then, as if yielding to a sudden impulse, and as if laboring under great excitement, with iron grip, he seized me by the hand and, looking earnestly at the dawning sky, he said:

"Mr. Johns, or whatever is your name, you are a puzzle to me. I remember having seen you somewhere in that world, which I fear. Oh, that is a different world there," he exclaimed and lifted his hand toward the west. It seemed as if he was trying to recollect a dream, and then continued:

"It is always in the spring, with the first flowers, that I awaken from a long sleep; and it is always in the fall that I feel an equally uncontrollable desire to go back. While I am sleeping or while I am awake here, I am utterly oblivious of the other stage. It is only when I am on my island that I am wholly my other self. As soon as I leave it, I am what I am now, a different man. Then comes the war between these two antagonistic selves; and I never know what moment the other, the one I fear and loathe, will triumph. It so happened that yesterday, when you met me, I was in the throes of the great struggle. You see, it is near the autumn, the period of the

crisis. The call of the old life had come to me only a few hours before you saw me, and then, when I saw you, it seemed as if you were the very embodiment of the thing which I feared. Had you met me a month ago, I should certainly not have recognized you; for up to that time the life which you have associated with me was a blank. Nor would I have remembered, had you reminded me. And even now I feel that you are another person different from that man whom I knew in that other life."

Abaza became silent and looked at me with puzzled eyes. It was getting lighter and the birds in the trees were waking. I then reminded him of my visits to his house on the Neva and I mentioned also the subject of our last conversation. The face before me was drawn and hard. It seemed not only much older, but of a wholly different type from that of the happy farmer of the island. Grasping again my hand, he continued:

"Oh, that horrible other life! You see, long, long ago, I married a woman for her money, and a secret has been a mountain between our loves. I soon found that I had married a statue and, on the other hand, I myself became silent and abstracted. And though we were always friends and never stooped to quarrel, yet love, the one

thing needful, was lacking. From this divorce of our bodies there ensued also the divorce of our souls. It was silently understood that each should have absolute liberty. Hence, it was, that an urge for wandering possessed me—an impulse I could not resist nor control. There seemed within me an irresistible mania to be once more the same man I had been—light hearted, simple and joyous. Only when I followed this periodical impulse was I happy; otherwise I should have killed myself. Hence, when I felt this feeling come over me, I at once left business, wife—everything, and without saying a word to anyone and without a cent in my pocket, went forth into the wilderness—seeking myself. I forgot the memory of my identity, I forgot I was rich and was content to be poor. I was a different man.

"In my wanderings, while fishing in this river, I, one day, out of curiosity, rowed to this island and met the old lady and her daughter."

He became silent and looked at me with his strange eyes as one who is speaking in a dream or in a hypnotic state. After a pause of some minutes he continued, but with more effort and almost in a whisper:

"It was in the midsummer. I had forgotten every claim the world had upon me, every inter-

est save the present. I had become twenty years younger, and, without even one little memory of that other face, I made love to this girl and within a month married her. I am at present, as I always am, when approaching the time of the great change, conscious of my two selves. I am now an island, as it were, between two personalities. As I was mad to leave it, so I am mad to return to the world, which calls me. I wish I would never more see that other world of strife and bitterness, that I could never again be that Abaza whom you knew. And now good-bye."

"Good-bye, Mr. Abaza," I stammered.

Then without another word he rose and stumbled slowly, like one to whom every step is an effort, back to his boat. His dreamy talk and the peculiar manner of his behavior had for a moment hypnotized me. It was a very unusual moment. The sun was rising behind the glorious verdure and the river lay enchanting before my eyes. Looking back I saw my friend urging his boat forward with all the vigor of young manhood. Afar, on the beach of the little island, I caught a glimpse of a figure, a woman, waving her hand in joyful welcome. And so full of strange thoughts, I began to walk back to the village.

A few months later, I met Abaza at a great reception in St. Petersburg.

"I am very glad to meet you," he said, smiling and extending his hand. "I think it is over a year since I last saw you at my house." He offered me a cigar which I refused, saying, that I had given up my smoking. "I wish I could be able to give it up," said Abaza, and we continued our conversation on various subjects. He appeared genuinely glad to talk with me; but, notwithstanding that we conversed together for over an hour, he gave not a sign, not a look, to indicate that he remembered our meeting in the Siberian wilds.

NOTE.—The man was, no doubt, one of those double personalities, whom we meet, though usually in a smaller degree, so often in life. Such dualism is seen in many drunkards, in many geniuses and in many extreme sensitive minds; but the difference with Abaza was, that his two personalities were entirely oblivious of each other and were so equally balanced.

His feeling that his wife was the tragic origin of his wealth and socal success, his conviction of the emptiness of mere commercial interests, combined with his desire for an affectionate love and for his old life and simplicity, worked like a yeast in his mind. Then, in that moment, when

the impulse to wander became irresistible, he lost all consciousness of being other than the farmer he had been slowly preparing himself to become.

THE GUEST OF THE CASTLE

I WAS making a trip on the Volga River, from Saratov to Nizhny Novgorod, when I made the acquaintance of a handsome and very intelligent woman, about forty years of age.

As we were sitting on the deck of the steamer, admiring the beautiful landscapes that followed, one upon the other, she gave me an interesting account of an old Tartar castle which the steamer would pass the next day and which, furthermore, she told me, was her summer residence.

"It has," she said, "a most peculiar history. It was built by Ivan the Terrible, after he began to hear the accusing voices of his remorse, and from its towers one has a beautiful view of the Volga and also glimpses here and there of several picturesque old towns and villas. I got the castle as a present from the Czar who, not knowing its historic significance, regretted later his generosity. But I am now disposed to part with it myself."

"Why?" I inquired.

"Because it is haunted," she replied. "I did not know this when I moved in; but soon there-

after, when I had come to make some repairs, I was told by the peasants that no one could live there. Being a materialist, I naturally paid little attention to this; but I soon became convinced that it was but too true, and now I am a firm believer in the supernatural. I have had several scientists as my guests and have offered a large sum of money for a physical explanation; but so far no one has been able either to explain or to expel these troublesome visitants."

"That is most interesting," said I, "almost incredible. And have you seen them yourself?"

"Often," she replied, "and while I have absolutely no fear, it is very annoying. One hears whispers in almost every corner. The candles are blown out by shadowy presences, and it is not unusual to hear the sound of sudden-closing doors and to see glimmering phantoms gliding through the halls."

"Is it possible?" said I. "I thought science had long ago resolved such things into nothing but the shadows of the subjective mind."

"So I thought once," she answered, "but even the greatest skeptics have been convinced that these are objective phantoms. To see a sudden face peering upon you as you lie in bed, to have the covering wrenched from you, to hear a smothered moaning, dreadful sobs, and peal after

peal of horrible laughter would, I think, be enough to convince every one."

"True," said I, "but one must experience them himself before he can believe such things. As I never have seen a ghost, I cannot believe that such a thing exists; yet, if it does, I should be glad to see it."

"You are welcome to come and see," she replied. "Be my guest as long as you like. And if you can give a reasonable explanation or expel these unwelcome visitors, I, on my part, will reward you well." In this manner we talked till nearly midnight.

To say that I was interested in this proposition would be to express it mildly. And besides the prospect of earning a large sum of money, which in itself was not unwelcome, was there not also the promise of a romance—an adventure? Long after the Princess had retired, I walked the deck in the chilly air, revolving various plans for the discomfiture of these spectres, which, I was fully persuaded, existed only in the imagination of fear and superstition.

That night my dreams were all of haunted castles and of ancient ghosts. The next morning I awoke with a severe cold and, as I came on the upper deck, I found my friend just where I had left her the evening before.

"I have become," she began "in consequence of the many restless nights in my castle, a poor sleeper, and therefore always get up at dawn."

"I have always wondered," said I, cynically, "why the spirits of the departed love darkness rather than light."

"Your skepticism gives me courage," she replied. "Doubt is always refreshing. I only wish I could have it. At any rate," she added, more vividly, "there is poetry in the sunrise, and I am glad to have you enjoy it with me; but I am sorry that your evening on deck has resulted in such a cold; for you are very hoarse."

We were soon engaged in an animated conversation; but now and then, when she gazed at me, I felt an involuntary shudder, which, do what I would, I could not repress. There was, at times, something repulsive in her look, something I could not fathom. Her eyes seemed to conceal some secret purpose and often, on her mouth, I caught an expression like that of a gloating smile.

But ordinarily she looked to be only a refined, well-bred woman of the upper class; and, thinking that my feelings were but the result of my dreams the night before, I tried to dismiss my fear as both stupid and unreasonable.

That afternoon, as we neared our destination, I asked her whether it would not be better for

me to let my trunk go on to Nizhny. She replied, that it would be wiser to take it, saying:

"You can't tell how long you will stay. The work you propose may take several weeks. Besides, if you can put up with the ghosts, you will find my place more than pleasant. You will have three rooms in the tower with a most beautiful view."

But the nearer we approached the castle, the more repulsive became her expression. "Is this only imagination?" I asked myself. But the more I conversed with her, the more uncomfortable I became, so that, had it not been for my promise and previous boastfulness, I should certainly have backed out.

"It will be a pleasure for me to converse with you on theosophy," said the lady. "Philosophy and spiritism are my hobbies. Have you read Blavatsky?"

"I have," I answered, "but her book does not impress me as being scientific."

"Perhaps not," she stammered, laughing, "but then science knows so little."

"True," I replied, "and Blavatsky even less."

"We shall see," she said so ominously that I shivered. "Do you like poetry?" she asked, and then she began a wonderful comparison of Pushkin with Byron. So brilliant was it, so enter-

taining and so intellectual, that I forgot my fear, and only saw before me a clever and remarkable woman.

As we stepped on shore we were met by a fashionable carriage. Two Circassians in livery sat on the box, and soon we were driving through a great park, full of huge trees, old ruins, grotesques statues, and here and there an Oriental pavilion.

And then, as we dashed out of the gloomy forest, there burst upon us, flanked with mighty towers, a gigantic castle. It was very ancient looking, and was of the Byzantine period, with a slight addition of Moorish style. It was all so sudden, so magnificent, that an exclamation of wonder burst from my lips.

"Welcome to Castle Zolotoi," she said, as we entered the huge doorway. "You will find us very unconventional. All my servants are deaf and dumb, otherwise they could never be persuaded to stay. Jermak, the old man with the gray moustache, will be for your apartment. I have only one maid for my apartment. Once she lived in the harem of a Pasha and therefore, as soon as her work is finished, she always goes veiled. She is, as you will see, very beautiful, and I treat her with deference.

The red light which you will notice in your

apartment indicates the time for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You may observe some peculiar things, but they are only part of this mediæval setting. Au-revoir—'till dinner."

With the old servant to guide me, I walked up several stairs and through many mysterious corridors and gloomy galleries, until, finally, Jermak bowed, as if to an invisible presence, before a massive brass door. The huge door opened and, entering, I found myself in a narrow room in the largest tower of the castle. Beyond this there was another and much larger room. This was the sitting-room, from the ceiling of which was suspended a lamp, with a red globe. Here I noticed a book-case and a massive table, and on the walls some pictures by famous artists. There was a splendid battle-scene by Verestchagin, a beautiful Corot, a charming Aivasovsky, and a fine picture of rural life by Repin. Behind this room was still another, in which was a picture, a mosaic, of Ivan the Terrible, a modern brass-bed, a large cabinet of curious workmanship, a porcelain table and several antique chairs.

In every room there was a large window, from which one had a fine view of the river. Amid the luxuriant verdure of the forests, I caught glimpses of gilded cupolas and of picturesque

villas, the whole forming a landscape of great charm.

I unpacked my trunk, laid out my clothes, took out some books, and then began to scrutinize things in detail. And now I walked back to the room I had first entered; but where was the door? It had entirely disappeared. I saw instead only a bare, reddish wall.

A cold shiver ran through my blood, and I rubbed my eyes. Was I awake or dreaming? I looked again, but there was nothing to reassure me. And, wishing that I had never seen my hostess or her castle and looking fearfully behind me, I returned to the room where I had left my books and clothes. It is really remarkable how a man's feelings, his logic and soul are influenced and changed under the various impressions he receives from his surroundings. Having been courageous in the most lonely deserts and wildernesses, I was not a little surprised to feel myself now, under such a spell of fear and excitement.

I was not superstitious, I was not afraid of the ghosts, and though I did not think that the Princess intended to do me any harm, yet nevertheless I was possessed of a peculiar mood, for I thought first of the cruelties of Ivan the Terrible and of his life at the castle, then of the

story of the ghosts as told by my hostess and finally of her wicked smile. I sat down to calm myself, but my thoughts would not be collected.

"Truly this is the abode of haunting feelings and a house of secret tragedies," I said nervously. A great uneasiness possessed me, as if some calamity was impending. Determined to shake off this feeling, I washed my face and opened the windows, and at once felt relieved.

About three hundred yards from the castle, I observed an old church with a cupola, surrounded by a high wall with an iron gate, before which crouched two huge Siberian blood-hounds, heavily chained. "Most extraordinary," I thought, for I could not see why a church should be guarded by dogs. In the opposite direction there was a large pond, in which was a little island, crowned with a white pavilion. Everywhere was the stamp of mystery, with which Ivan the Terrible liked to surround himself while he was resting here, weary of cruelty, and no reason I could give could reconcile the place with the beginning of the twentieth century. Not a sound could be heard. The castle seemed the very home of death.

Far below I saw several men dressed, like Jermak, in Oriental robes, but though they often looked at one another yet, so far as I could see,

none spake ever a word. They might as well have been dead men who were walking there.

After this survey of the landscape, I began to scrutinize the room. I opened all the drawers in the cabinet, looked under the bed and behind it, examined the floor and read the papers I found here and there, but all my search revealed nothing suspicious.

Having satisfied myself with this examination, I again returned to the place where the door had been. I tapped the walls on every side, but as everything sounded solid and as it was growing dark, I at last gave it up. Suddenly the rooms were flooded with a red light and, remembering that this was the announcement of dinner, I made myself presentable, and walked with some misgivings into the room with the red wall.

There, to my surprise, where I had just searched the wall, I saw the door by which I had entered. Jermak, the gloomy servant, in a military livery, awaited me in the corridor. His face was as impassive as a sphinx as he led me, through many winding ways, into the spacious dining-room, where the Princess, in a splendid Turkish costume, met me. Smiling sweetly, she said:

"I suppose you thought I had taken you into

fairy land, when you failed to find the door out of your apartment."

"I did think it strange," I replied as carelessly as I could.

"You see I want to keep the old place just as it was," she ventured to explain, as if desiring to divert me from suspicion. "It does make one feel a bit uncomfortable though, as there is no way out. But to change it would really destroy the charm. The apartment in which you are staying was once occupied by the terrible Czar himself when he preferred to be isolated from the world. Often he desired to be inaccessible to anyone for days and nights at a time, therefore, he had an apartment constructed without apparent doors. A subterranean gallery connects that apartment with the chapel and with an Oriental pavilion which the fearful ruler used to visit secretly. In the chapel he would have himself whipped by the monks, for the wrongs he knew he had committed; but in the pavilion he often enjoyed himself by watching the torture and murder of the most beautiful girls of his empire, after they had been outraged by him. So you see it is connected with an awful history."

I replied that such historic antiquity was certainly romantic, but that it might seem other-

wise in case of fire. At this she laughed, saying:

"There is no danger of that."

The table was decorated with the most gorgeous flowers, quite in keeping, I thought, with the service of antique silver and chased gold. The meal was served by a tall waiter with all the gravity of a brooding Buddha, and the food was truly delicious.

At the table I nearly forgot my suspicions, and, as my hostess was altogether enchanting, I spent a very enjoyable hour. Now and then, to be sure, I became aware of that same expression, which before I had found so repellant, but the succeeding smile always lulled my fear to sleep.

After dinner we continued our conversation in the library, which was on the second floor. On the book-cases were the busts of some of the great authors and musicians: Dante, Shakespeare, Lermontoff, Chopin and Glinka. I also remember, in the centre, a splendid marble Sappho singing to her lyre.

We sat, side by side, before the grate, on a large sofa, and I asked the Princess to read me some of her poems. She smiled graciously and, walking to the table took therefrom some sheets of paper, covered with a neat handwriting, and said:

"This is my last poem. I call it 'The Nymph.'"

And then in a voice, remarkable for its modulation and melody, she began to read the poem.

"The Nymph" was a beautiful maiden who emerged at night from the waters of the Volga, bewitching the boatmen with her shining eyes. These, feeling an irresistible impulse to embrace her, plunge into the river where they drown. But there is one on whom she has no power. Do what she will, neither with song nor gesture can she allure him. He is adamant to her charms. At last one night, as the ghostly moon rose over the waters, she bounds from the crest of a wave and, leaping into his boat, attempts to kiss him. But he, repulsing her, drives a knife into her heart and then discovers that she is his lost beloved whom a witch had stolen and trained to be a nymph. Overcome with remorse, the youth gathers the body in his arms and plunges with it into the waves.

The poem, powerful both in matter and style, was very beautiful. As she read it, the Princess was full of fire, and never have I heard a poem rendered with such feeling. But near the close her voice became scarcely audible, and when she had finished she seemed utterly exhausted and cold.

Deeply impressed, I gazed, as if entranced, up-

on her features. Something terrible seemed hidden there, and her subconscious, but real self began gradually to eat like a burning acid into my mind.

"Conversing with you on the steamer," began my hostess after a pause, slightly embarrassed, "I found you a student of the human soul and its depths, and I decided to make you a prisoner in my castle. I used the story of the ghosts partly as a lure to get you here."

"How is that?" I stammered, looking surprised at my smiling hostess. Her strangely staring eyes made me uneasy. I realized that she was one of those degenerate and eccentric aristocratic types of which Europe is so full. Gazing at me for a few minutes mutely she began:

"Don't be excited. You shall know in a few days more of my plans and of your mission. You see I am studying the psychology of passions and other æsthetic and erotic emotions. I wonder why it is that we love a beautiful body more than a beautiful soul? Can you tell me why we love beauty, its sensation and illusion? Why is it that the pleasure of the present is the despair of the future? Beauty to me is an enjoyment. But the more I have enjoyed the more empty is my soul afterwards. Why is it that a beautiful soul shuns a beautiful body? Tell me, what is the use

of beauty? Has ever beautiful music, beautiful picture, dress or pleasure improved mankind? Can you prove to me that the soul and heart of the modern civilized man who has heard the best operas and the best plays, who has seen the most beautiful pictures and read the most beautiful stories and poems is more beautiful than the simple soul of an unspoiled peasant? The more one educates himself the more comfort and beauty he requires and the more beauty he appropriates, the more ruined he becomes psychically and physically. The passion and the love of a highly educated modern Kulturtraeger are the great problems of his life. How shall he develop and use the celestial notes of his soul? Marriage, family and all the old conventional methods are illusions. I wish that you could help me to solve this great universal problem. Don't you know what I mean?"

And then she began to tell me of her studies of the soul, of her ancestors, the Romanoffs, and though I listened, apparently with interest, yet all the while I was finding, now in the eyes and then again in the mouth, the clue to the mystery below her words. The feeling she now engendered was one of infinite horror. Her eyes emanated a passionate fire and her personality almost stifled me. It was as if I were breathing

the fumes of some deadly narcotic.

At last she suggested that we have some coffee in her studio. This was in one of the smaller towers, and it was redolent with the heavy odor of tropical flowers. She showed me several paintings by unknown artists, all of them illustrating her psychical researches and her poems and all of a strange erotic character, beautiful nudes, young men and maidens, emerging from delicate draperies into a mist of dreams.

How she called him I do not know, but Jermak, noiseless as a ghost and stolid as a statue, brought two cups of coffee on a tray, and also two little glasses filled with a cordial of a beautiful and delicate green.

"I am, as you have observed, quite Oriental in my tastes," said the Princess, as she emptied the cordial into the cup, "and take my coffee after the manner of the Seraglio. This cordial gives it a flavor truly exquisite. Won't you try it?" She asked smiling sweetly.

Fearing to excite in her a suspicion of my suspicion, I could not refuse, though a voice within me whispered: "Beware, this is death!" I was, however, resolved to swallow as little as I could. Fortunately, my cold made the use of a handkerchief often necessary and thus, while affecting to cough, I managed, after I had

taken a large swallow, to eject the coffee into my handkerchief. By this means, unknown to the Princess, I emptied the whole small cup in four or five swallows, while, as I conversed, I pretended to sip but slowly.

"Before I entrust you with the details of my studies and of your mission I would like to know if you have ever loved a woman and if a woman has ever loved you? I suppose you are not married. Anyhow, that does not mean anything," said my hostess with a peculiar frown, gazing at me, penetratingly. I shivered from that look and felt intuitively that there was something perverse in her soul, but what it was I could not determine. After a pause of painful silence I replied that my conception of love and passion had always been in favor of marriage and the strictest chastity. I also told her that my idea of love was that it was a sacred poetry of which I could never speak as of an experiment.

"I suppose you will change your opinion after you know of my studies," replied the Princess with a mysterious twinkle in her ominous eyes. "I will introduce you to the most beautiful maidens whom I have here in one of my pavilions. If you have power to resist their romantic temptations, then we will discuss the question from a different point of view."

She then began to tell me of her experiments, and it seemed as if she wanted to hypnotize me. All the time I was watching her eyes and gestures, and every moment the feeling of repulsion grew stronger. Whether it was telepathy or imagination I cannot say, but I constantly felt words that I did not hear.

"Dear man, you are in my power—This will do the work—I am sure I shall get him—" these and expressions of a similar nature seemed to emanate from her personality. At times I reassured myself that these were but inferences, put into words, from my suspicion. But no sooner had I divested myself of my fears than some gloating expression on her mouth, some gleam of exultation in her eyes, made me tremble with apprehension. At last the Princess, in a manner wholly conventional, said:

"But I must not keep you up too late. I fear you did not sleep as well as usual last night. But do not let my gruesome stories oppress you. You should rest well. Tomorrow night, I will introduce you to my maidens, and then you will observe enough to occupy your attention."

Though I thanked the Princess for her consideration, I did not feel the relief she intended; for it was not the ghosts which I feared, but the evil I read in her eyes. And then, as suddenly

as if he sprang out of some hidden niche in the wall, Jermak appeared to conduct me once more to my apartment.

The door opened as mysteriously as before, and with a nameless shiver I entered. As it was dark, I was not able to observe by what mechanism the door was silently changed into a bare wall. And as I stood to one side and felt the gap closing swiftly behind me, I could have cried aloud for very fear. But I knew that I was a prisoner and that to attempt to escape under the vigilant eyes of Jermak might defeat my purpose, so I resolved to wait for some better opportunity.

After lighting one of the candles on the cabinet, for the lamp, it seems, was simply used to announce the meals, I again examined the three rooms. I was greatly excited, oppressed by the haunting memories of my apartment and by an unexplainable presentiment; for I had the feeling that the castle would become my grave, and that I had been lured thither for some sinister purpose by a Siren. It was quite natural under those conditions that my suspicions were exaggerated, but I could not help it. My examination of the room revealed nothing new, and I sat down in absolute bewilderment; and now I took out my handkerchief, to see if I could detect anything peculiar in the odor of the ejected

coffee. After holding it closely to my nose for some minutes, I began to feel a strange but pleasurable drowsiness. Satisfied that my suspicions were well founded, I put the handkerchief back into my pocket and resolved to spend the night in devising some way of escape. I thought that the Princess, as soon as she had given me enough of the drug to produce its desired effect of drunkeness, would be likely to appear on the scene; and in the event of her not finding me in such a condition as she expected, she might infer my suspicion of her intentions and complicate my chances of escape. On the other hand, I was in the power of an influential member of the Imperial family, which, in Russia, is beyond punishment, so that I was practically her defenceless prisoner, as she already had hinted. Furthermore, as I had heard much of the degenerate ideas and fantastic views of the Russian high aristocracy, I was prepared to expect everything.

Hence I felt that whatever I did, I must do quickly. As I was at least a hundred feet from the ground, the solution of the difficulty then was in the door. "Surely there must be some way of opening it from the inside," I argued. To find this I trod on every foot of the floor, and pressed against every foot of the wall until I came to the picture of Ivan the Terrible. By the light of

the candle I gazed at one particular point, slightly protuberant, under the picture and suddenly, like an inspiration, the thought came to me: "Press that spot!" Pushing as strongly as I could with my finger against that point, it receded slowly, and when I felt that it could go no further inward, and realizing moreover that this was the desired solution, I rushed with the candle into the first room. There to my delight was the open door; and, resolving not to risk my chance by a moment's delay, grasping my hat and cane, I ran as fast as I could into the corridor. Hardly had I bounded over the threshold, when the door closed swiftly behind me. By the candle light I could see that, though on the outside the semblance of a door still remained, by some device the wall, on which the door was a mere relief, had been closed noiselessly behind me, caused doubtless by the contact of my foot with some spring in the floor. I had now to find my way out as best as I could. In the hurry of my exit I had left many necessary things behind. But I dared not go back. Being now out of the room, I resolved to stay out, and as I had no wish to meet Jermak or the Princess or to follow the long corridor which connected with her living apartment, I followed another corridor to the right.

At the end of this was a large window. It

opened upon the park, but I could see nothing. All was silence and darkness. Now and then an owl hooted dismally and occasionally a bat flitted mournfully from roof to roof. I looked at my watch; it was just midnight. Suddenly the pavilion I had seen on the island in the pond was aglow with light and through the windows I could see moving shadows like a dance of delirious ghosts, while a low and langurous music drifted across the water.

I now looked about to see if I could find a stairway by which I could descend. Retracing my steps, I came to an open door, which I had failed to observe. Entering, I found another and much larger passage, on the floor of which were the fresh droppings of a wax-candle, as if some one had but recently been walking there. When I had reached the end of this passage, I found another window, on each side of which was a closed door. I could no longer see the lighted pavilion, but still the mystic strains of that music floated down the night, even more weird and mysterious than before, until with a wail, like the cry of a soul in an ecstacy of sorrow, it died upon the wind.

Gently opened the door to my right, I listened. Afar I could hear a sound as of muffled voices and of laughter subdued by distance. Hastily

shutting this door, I sought the other, which opened upon a narrow stair. Descending very carefully, for I could not guess what new mystery might burst upon me, after what seemed to me a countless succession of steps, I at last reached the bottom. Here I found another passage, the mouldy walls of which were so damp that here and there a puddle of water had formed on the hollow-sounding floor. I guessed that I was underground. It was pitch dark and, to make as little noise as possible, I walked on tip-toe what seemed to me interminable distance. At last I emerged into the open night, where by the wind my candle was at once snuffed out. Here, for the first time, I breathed freely, and it was as if a great load had been lifted off my heart. But this feeling of relief was not to last, for just before me loomed a dark forbidding tower, like a monstrous sentinel, barring my advance. It was not until I heard the low growling of a dog and the rattle of a chain, that I realized I was at the little church which, with its gloomy walls and two watch dogs, I had observed from my window in the castle.

I now perceived that I was just in the rear of the edifice and, whether fortunately or unfortunately, that I was within the walls that surround it. My first impulse was to attempt to

scale this wall, but I resolved first to take my bearings, finding no little consolation in the thought that the ferocious blood-hounds were at the gate, a few hundred yards to the front.

Hardly knowing where to go next, I stood still for some moments, scanning the situation very carefully. As the church was absolutely dark, I felt that now at last there was nothing to fear. Furthermore, as the dogs were chained, they could not harm me. Measuring the wall with my eye, I found it to be about ten feet high—too high for climbing unless I could find something to stand on.

"Possibly I may be able to find this in the church," I thought, and as this was necessary to my escape and having now lost all fear save that of exciting the dogs, lest their barking should arouse the inmates of the castle, and being also not a little curious to explore the historic sanctuary, of which the Princess had told me, I resolved to enter, if it were possible.

Accordingly, concluding that it would be better to make the attempt where I was, in the rear, I walked circumspectly about twenty steps forward until I could discern the outline of a window. To my joy I found that it was unlocked and then, raising it slowly until the aperture was

large enough to admit my body, I crawled through.

Within all was darkness, and as I stood there in the silence I could hear the beating of my heart. Then, after listening, to make sure that I was not pursued, I took out a match to relight the candle. By this glimmering light I was now able to take my bearings. I stood in a spacious chapel. Before me was an altar, on which lay an open Bible, seemingly very old and almost decayed. Everything appeared neglected, covered with mould and cobwebs, and on the dusty floor I noticed the tracks of a small shoe. The windows at the side were of stained glass, representing the torturing of souls in hell by bloodthirsty demons, and on the walls between the windows hung several holy pictures. All this I could observe within the distance of the twenty feet or less which was lighted by the candle. For a moment I imagined the insane Czar kneeling before the altar while he was tortured by his remorse and whipped by the monks who at the same time read their prayers to calm his conscience. This terrible thought made me shudder and, in order to get rid of it, I began to search for whatever might serve to help me scale the wall. Seeing a little door to my left, I entered and descending a narrow stair I found

myself in a vaulted crypt. Here were one or two chairs, a little table, some lumber freshly planed, and three or four mutilated wooden statues, probably of the apostles. Prone on the floor, before my feet, lay another statue, the head of which, crowned with thorns, lay on the floor.

Though relieved to find the materials which would enable me to make my escape, yet I must confess that I was nevertheless somewhat disappointed. I had almost expected to come upon some fabulous treasure; for the presence of the bloodhounds plainly argued the presence of something precious enough to be guarded. Walking a few steps to the left I scanned more carefully the mysterious and bare-looking sanctuary and, as I seized one of the chairs, I beheld something, covered with a black cloth, upon which was written in big red letters:

"Mene, Mene, Tekel."

Curiously raising the cloth, I beheld what almost froze my blood with horror. Side by side lay three black coffins. Did they contain the victims of the time of Ivan the Terrible, or were they the tragic consequences of the love mysteries of the Princess? Instantly, aroused by the noise I had made in grasping the chair, the great blood-hounds set up a terrific roar, and without once looking back I dashed up the stairs,

stumbling as I did so, and also dropping the candle.

Groping fearfully forward, I at last reached the open window, whence I threw out the chair and then jumped to the ground. And now I perceived that my precautions were well taken, for, as I raced toward the wall with the chair in my hand, I saw, though indistinctly, probably not more than twenty steps from the place where the passage emerged into the church-yard, the figure of a man, all in black. While I was protected by the darkness, I was naturally too anxious to escape to give more than a glimpse in that direction, but I could see that the figure held a lantern in his hand and was advancing rapidly. I heard also, behind him, a sound of many feet, and, feeling that I was pursued, I mounted the chair and was over the wall before my pursuers could see me, and ran as fast as I could across the fields. Suddenly I heard the sound of a shriek. It was a terrible cry like that of a maniac, a cry as of an infinite despair.

Looking back, I could see nothing but the outlines of the gloomy castle, like a dreadful monster in the darkness.

After I had run about ten minutes, I stopped to listen; but now I could hear only the barking of the dogs and the sound of voices in the dis-

tance; and, after resting a few moments, I walked leisurely on till dawn.

Meeting an old peasant, I asked him where I could get some breakfast. After scrutinizing me very curiously, he replied:

"Come to my home, my friend, and we will give you some bread and milk."

Having eaten the simple breakfast which his good wife had prepared, I asked the peasant if he knew anything about Castle Zolotoi.

"We know but little about it," he replied, "but we hear strange tales, very strange tales," and he shook his head significantly. "Last winter, a man named Yaska boasted that he was going to rob the church, which is said to contain much gold, but he disappeared—God knows. It's the devil's own place—." The old peasant crossed himself and became silent. Full of strange thoughts, I continued my trip to Nizhny.

Studies of Truth and Suffering

Suffering endured for truth, like a purgatorial fire, destroys the weak and purifies the strong. The more one is able to suffer the more he can enjoy.

FATHER FEODOSI

The moon was just emerging from a cloud, and as I looked up I saw through the bars, a pale face with a lovely grey head.

FATHER FEODOSI

THE prisons of Russia—they are the graves of the living. Dark, cold and silent, each cell is a tomb. Lone and more than cheerless, it is the home of hunger, the hunger of the body and the still more terrible hunger of the soul. To die by inches, to see the world of life sinking forever and to hear hour after pitiless hour toll the iron knell of hope—it is a living death!

In this world of isolation—this land of bleak and cold—I spent four terrible years. In suffering time creeps—oh, how slowly. "One, two, three, four—" you count no more. It is forever the same. Always the same silence, the same dismal cell, the same aching hunger. Every hour is a day, every day a month of mad and lingering monotony.

During those dark years I began to hear mysterious sounds, as if of some one tapping on the wall, and now and then on the metallic heating tube. It sounded so much like the click of the telegraph that I began to surmise that this was a method of secret communication between the different cells. Many times I tried to interpret

this secret language, but in spite of all my endeavors I was unable to understand it.

One day, while taking my customary exercise in the prison-yard, a piece of bread rolled to my feet. The significance of this did not at once dawn upon me, but I could not shake off the feeling that it was in some way important. At last, after I had made sure that no one was watching, I stooped down and picked it up. I continued my walk as if nothing had happened; but as soon as I got to my cell I discovered that it contained a small piece of paper on which was written the secret code of the prisoners. This comprised twenty-five different ciphers, each of which consisted of a definite succession of taps, long and short. For instance:

a 1—1, b 1—2, c 1—3, etc.

For several days I occupied myself with practicing this simple code; and, when I felt I was able to use it, I began slowly to converse with my neighbors.

Life at once became full of interest. I was again in touch with mankind and the world. I was soon able to speak very rapidly. Hearing a voice in the cell to my left, which for some time had been empty, and surmising that I had a new neighbor, I tapped on the wall, inquiring his name.

"I am an old man and am called Father Feodosi," was the reply. "I have been imprisoned for thirteen years, but have just been transferred to this cell. During all those years, I have not heard, with the exception of the replies of the keepers, the sound of a human voice, not even the song of a bird. And nature to me is dearer than life itself. But I shall die without one more look at the rising sun, without the sweet companionship of flowers and trees, without that communion with nature which was once my worship of its Creator."

"For what are you imprisoned?" I inquired.

"Why am I here?" responded the old monk. "Because I would not be fettered by superstition. I had begun to preach that nature is the temple where we can best worship God. I told my people:

"Listen to the voices of the winds and the birds. Listen to your own hearts and you shall know God. Heaven and hell are within us, and the only sin is that against your own nature or the welfare of your fellows. For such counsel I was persecuted. I was accused of heresy and sent to solitary confinement for life."

"So you are against the old religions, and it is your opinion that mankind would do better without them?"

"I think so," he replied. "There must be a foundation of the good as self evident as the axioms of mathematics. If only we could find this, the world would have a universal religion. Creeds would die, division would cease and all artificial boundaries would be abolished. As the passions, the reason and the will of man are the strongest forces in nature, it follows that only when they are dominated and controlled by the soul shall man be the master of the world. The secret of rulership is the subordination of the sensual and the immoral to the spiritual and the moral, and only when the soul and ego of man are in harmony with the universal is he truly religious and good.

"Now the goal of civilization is undoubtedly the greatest good to the greatest number, or the harmonious happiness of mankind, and the goal of the individual is the attainment of that perfect adjustment to the universal scheme of things in which the soul of man is at one with the soul of the universe. To know the deepest truth, to feel the highest beauty and to radiate the greatest freedom—this is to be righteous. Any religion, therefore, whose precepts fall short of this is evil. Happiness is the beginning and harmony the end—they alone are God."

"But how about the soul—the psychical universe within?"

"Oh, yes, there is a soul, but it is entirely different from that taught by the old religions. Once I concluded that the attention was the eye of the soul, the focus in which all the rays of mind meet and converge; then that it is the interpreter which translates the objective into terms of the subjective. And though I could not define it, yet I was convinced that the attention is the fundamental cause of man's development. It alone can enable one to achieve and conquer; yet, when turned toward self-gratification, it becomes also the instrument of degradation.

"The attention should therefore be trained. One should be able to divert it from the lesser to the higher good. A man is great and successful in proportion to the intensity of his attention. The greatest criminal shows an ability equal to that of the greatest genius. The difference between the two is solely that of the direction of the attention. The former is devoted to destruction; the latter to construction."

Of course, I agreed with my new neighbor, and then I told him my story. There was much which we had to tell each other, little, it is true, of the present; but in the prison the past, as it recedes, looms large. One becomes to himself

almost an abstraction. Things long submerged in the consciousness come to the surface—the faces of dead memories; and there is therefore nearly always something to talk about.

Doubtless he often speculated about my appearance, as I did about his. His talk and views gave me some idea of the structure of his soul, and from this unconsciously I formed my conception of his personality. I imagined him tall, pale, benevolent and venerable of aspect, with the look of a prophet. Having kept quiet for half an hour, as if meditating, he continued:

"The human soul is a universe in itself—the mirror, as it were, of the greater universe around. In this miniature world are oceans and rivers, valleys and mountains. It is populated with thoughts, and there are kingdoms and cities. Armies are there and battles, defeats that are terrible and also glorious victories. All that is to be is foreshadowed in the soul. Poem, story, picture and palace are born there, also every invention, every noble action and every crime."

Father Feodosi finished his talk, and now ensued one of those terrible nights of brooding—a night of horrors, when the soul like a phantom haunted, one by one, the dim chambers of the past.

I soon learned that my friend, who had been a great student in theology, was a deep thinker and that for many years he had been engaged on a work, showing man's relation to the Infinite. We spent hundreds of hours in the discussion of ethics and psychology, and from the vast stores of his wisdom he enriched me with many striking conclusions. One observation, of which I made a note at the time, will indicate the nature of his thinking.

"It is wrong," he said, "to assert that egoism is the fundamental force of human life, just as it is wrong to say that altruism alone brings happiness and maintains harmony. It is the union of these two principles or egoistic altruism which is the fundamental law of the universe. Otherwise society would soon cease to exist, and men would be little more than brutes. As every man tends to be the centre of the universe so the universe tends to be a huge man. At first one feels the impulse of purely personal instincts, then comes the feeling for family, then love for friends, the nation and mankind. In its highest phases, the ego is that which makes man the conqueror of self. Thus egoism becomes at last that purest altruism, the Golden Rule, which maintains the equilibrium between man and his surroundings, between his giving and taking."

"But I would like to know how you became convinced of this divine truth?" I interrupted. Then followed a pause of several minutes and it seemed as if he were pondering my question. Then he continued:

"In my search for God, I studied various religions, conversed with the most eminent divines and visited the great temples of the world, but I was as far away from my object as ever. Often one would say with triumph: 'this is God,' but I saw only His shadow.

"I explored the spacious fields of philosophy, but He whom I sought was not there. I delved into science and uncovered its buried foundations, but He was not there. I worshipped at the shrine of art and I wondered, but He was not there. They spoke to me in symbols and showed me the mirrors of His beauty and the shadow of His truth, but I was not satisfied. I hungered for the flesh and blood of His living organism.

"I went to life, thinking that in struggle I might find Him. A wave of restlessness carried me around the world. I found joy in suffering and suffering in joy and learned to feel with my brothers. Out of the crowd I cried, but I heard no answer. Finally I looked into my own soul and there I saw His image. And a

voice spoke from my own blood: 'I am the God for whom you have sought.'

"I fell on my knees and said: 'Oh, God! How shall I worship thee?' I seemed to hear a thunder of laughter and it grew dark in my soul, and out of the darkness came a voice:

"'I do not need your prayers. Your words are weakness and your ceremonies are but dust. I am: That is the beginning and the end of knowledge. You cannot search me out. I am the Universe of the universes and the Blood of the bloods to whom you can add nothing and from whom you can take nothing away. Be happy and harmonize with your surroundings, for I need your happiness and harmony. Only life is worship.'

"'How am I to attain happiness and harmony?' I asked, and from afar, from the depth of my inner universe, like a wind of wisdom, came the reply:

"'Listen to the voice of your own heart, of your own brain, and to the whisper in your blood. Listen to your own conscience, reason and will. For they are in me and of me. They, and they alone, will bring you into harmony with me and with nature, and harmony is happiness.'"

In listening to the talk of my friend, Father Feodosi, my soul grew strong and I contem-

plated the earth with its insignificant passions and struggles, as if I were a spectator millions of miles away. My thoughts and feelings and all the drama of man were like the life of a worm on a leaf. And yet, while all that which men call personality shrank into infinite littleness, the soul itself expanded, until I felt I was brother to every living being.

I remember one night, when I awoke, cold with fright and trembling. A dead silence lay upon the world, and the full moon shone with a ghostly light through the window. The moon seemed to me to be the mother of phantasy. She lulled my thoughts to sleep and left me dreaming. Visions came in her wake, visions of things to come and phantoms of the past.

I had been dreaming a dream of horrors, such as only the prisoner dreams to whom hope has said farewell. Outside the wind was moaning, and I could hear my neighbors walking in their cells.

"What is the matter?" I telegraphed Father Feodosi, "Why don't you sleep?"

"The light of the moon was so intense that it awoke me," he responded. "And in the shadows on the wall I have been imagining that I saw the successive picture of my past. Just now I saw a garden, the same garden where once I walked

with my sweetheart in the moonlight. Again I heard her voice with its sweet confession of love; and, once more delirious with joy, I murmured her name."

"Was it all phantasy?" I inquired, not a little surprised to hear such words from one whom I believed to be merely a monk and a student of mysteries.

"No," he replied after a pause, "it all really happened, but I can give you only the merest outline; for it is not often that I allow my mind to dwell on these things. They make me too sad. Yet, now that I have surrendered myself for a moment to this memory, I shall let you know something of my romance.

"We met in a railroad train—a train de luxe—in France. It was twenty years ago. We were not introduced; only our eyes met, and they kissed. I occupied the seat, facing her and her mother. They were evidently English or Americans. I could not tell which, as I was not then able to converse in their language.

"The mother, though dressed with elegance and refinement, was very prim and precise—a Puritan, I thought. The daughter, surpassingly beautiful, had the most adorable smile I had ever seen. I lost my heart to her as soon as I saw her. Though we sat, face to face, silently for

hours, yet our eyes spoke a mute language, the intuitive and subconscious language of the soul.

"As we neared a certain town, and while her mother slumbered peacefully in the seat, I noticed that her eyes grew very sad, as if they would say: 'How sorry I am that I shall not see you any more!' Surely my own eyes said the same to her. A moment of great emotion ensued.

"All at once I saw an expression of triumph in her eyes. I noticed that she seemed excited, her lips trembled, her cheeks glowed and she left her seat. She went toward the end of the long car, and it was as if her eyes whispered, mysteriously: 'Will you follow me?'

"I followed.

"She moved to the other end of the compartment and stood, as if she were admiring the landscape. I walked slowly toward her like one in a dream. As I approached her, she turned her eyes full upon me, as if to say: 'Can I trust you?' I trembled; but when I saw how embarrassed she was, how she blushed and, sweetly smiling, drooped her eyes, I felt reassured and whispered:

" 'I love you.'

"She evidently understood, though I had spoken in Russian, and murmured something,

exceedingly sweet to hear, in a language unknown to me.

"I took her hand and she did not withdraw it, and then, yielding to an irresistable impulse, I kissed her very tenderly. She smiled sweetly and, taking out her cardcase, wrote on a card, on which was her name, her address in town, the hotel where she would stop with her mother. Then she wrote the number twelve and over it placed a moon, and then drew a small house surrounded with trees; and I apprehended that she wished me to meet her at midnight in the garden of the hotel.

"After pressing the card into my hand and one more look, she returned softly to her sleeping mother. I saw them as they got into a carriage at the station and the eyes of the young girl beamed on me with a strange happiness, as if to say: 'How glad I am to have found you. I am yours and will follow you to the ends of the earth.'

"Almost mad with joy, I walked the streets until midnight and then, as the clock struck twelve, I stood in the garden of the hotel she had named. It was a moonlight night and I sat down on a bench near a rose-bush. A nightingale was dissolving his soul in melody and it seemed as if the night was alive with love. Suddenly I

heard a stir behind me and out of the shrubbery stepped a girl, slender as a lithe gazelle. Her face was covered with a white veil and, as we embraced, I felt her beating heart throbbing in unison with my own. I could see that she had dared all for love.

"We could not understand each other. We could only look into each other's eyes, smile and kiss. It was the most glorious of all glorious moments, and we were as happy as I believe it is ever permitted mortals to be. For an hour we remained there and then, with the understanding that we were to meet in the same manner and at the same hour the following night, we parted, to rehearse the whole scene in our dream. The next night found us as before. In the meantime I had written in English words, culled laboriously from a dictionary, a proposal of immediate marriage in London.

"By the light of the moon she read it and by the light of the moon she plighted me her everlasting troth, which we sealed with our sacred kiss.

"Mother and daughter left for England the next morning. I followed and in two days we were secretly made man and wife. Then we sought the consent of the mother. There were tears, but it all ended very happily. The mother,

seeing her daughter so glad, became glad with her gladness.

"We went to Russia, and our brief married life was all happiness. We followed our hearts, and did not allow custom to stifle our feelings and emotions. Never can I forget how sweetly she would say in the language of her husband:

"'I love you.'"

"And here Father Feodosi paused. I could hear him walking, as if in great excitement; and that night he spoke no more. But when the next evening I heard the ominous clang of his door, I felt that I had lost a great and good friend, and my heart was heavy for many weeks.

Fortunately I was released from that dreary world of silence and sorrows. I went to live on my farm, and my life in the prison became merely a memory. It was indeed hard for me to realize that it had ever been; but when I saw a flying dove or a creeping mouse—those symbols of my friendships in the prison—I would start as if I had seen a ghost, for in that moment I beheld, as in a flash, the whole kaleidoscope of those terrible years.

One rainy evening in the fall, a year after my release, as I was sitting alone in my room, listening to the crying of the wind, I heard a knocking at the door. As I opened it, there stood

before me a ragged vagabond, dirty and unkempt, a perfect type of the Russian tramp. In his hand he held a large stick and on his back was the bundle, without which such as he are never seen. The sight of him, so fierce and brutal of aspect, for a moment filled me with fear, as I felt that, lone and defenceless as I was, he could easily kill me. However, speedily recovering my courage, I invited him to come in, which he did, loosening his burden as he did so. He was soaked to the skin and seemed altogether miserable.

"Are you hungry?" I inquired and, without waiting for a reply, I brought him a loaf of bread and a pitcher of milk, which he devoured ravenously.

"I have not eaten since morning," he growled, "and then I had nothing but a slice of black bread and a cup of cold water."

"Where do you come from?" I asked. He looked at me a moment, as if hesitating, and then said:

"Do you know Father Feodosi?"

"Yes, I knew him," I replied. "He was my neighbor for over two years in prison, but why do you ask?"

"Well, I will tell you," he said importantly. "I have just left him—that is I left him where I

found him, in the Solovetsky Monastery, over a month ago. Do you know where that is? It is on an island in the White Sea—eight hundred miles to the north. It took me just thirty-six days to bring this letter from your friend."

As he said this, he pulled from a pocket in his ragged shirt a dirty looking document which he handed me. As I took it, my hand trembled, for suddenly a sleeping memory awoke and walked like a spectre through the corridors of my mind.

On the rude envelope was written, below the address, directions how the messenger could best reach me. And now, having torn off the covering, I eagerly scanned the contents. What these were will appear later; and, being somewhat curious as to the motives of my guest and why he, a tramp who lived by begging and stealing, should undertake so long a journey, I questioned him as to how he happened to meet the Father. This is what he told me:

"I went to the monastery, disguised as a pilgrim, though my real object was not to pray to God and the saints, but to get free board and lodging for a couple of weeks; for you know the monastery provides this for every pilgrim.

"I felt that I would like to have enough to eat like other people for awhile, and so I undertook

the pilgrimage partly as an adventure. Of course, I had to attend mass and that sort of thing and had to listen to many tiresome sermons—all for the good of my soul, I suppose. So, to make a good job of it, I submitted to the requirements as gracefully as I could, went through the gestures, said Amen and such other words as sounded holy, looked very meek and virtuous, confessed a good many sins I never committed and forgot to confess lots of others, much bigger, which I had committed, and, on the whole, acquitted myself so creditably that I believe I made the impression of being a most pious individual.

"Of course, I don't believe in the rot they tell us and don't give a damn about saving my soul. If I have a soul I don't know it, and I've had such a hell of a time to keep my body above ground that I've never had leisure to monkey with my soul.

"At the same time I suppose there must be a God somewhere, though he does seem to make himself awfully scarce when he's wanted; and I have a sneaking suspicion that there is love and brotherhood, pity and that sort of thing somewhere, if, like gold, we can only find them.

"And as I've done many a job that I'm beginning to feel sort of squeemish about, so that

I'd feel pretty mean if God knew all the details, which I suppose he does without my telling him—" he said, smiling grimly, "I concluded that if I could help some chap that's in a bad fix, maybe for being too good, as many of them are in the monastery prisons, I'd place a few figures, maybe, to my credit, so as to help me out in the last accounting. I don't believe much in the masses and prayers and such things, but I've heard somewhere that it's the good deed that counts and I've always suspected that that was about right.

"So, when I was in the monastery, feeding on the fat of the land, it occurred to me that, as I was an expert in picking locks, I might help some of the prisoners to escape. It wasn't an easy job to get next to them though, but at last I found a secret passage from the chapel into the corridor of the prison. When I had reached this, I tried several of the locks; but I found I could not make any headway at all. I couldn't open a single door. They were all iron and so bolted and barred that nothing less than an earthquake or Gabriel's trumpet could open them.

"So I had to give it up, but as I saw there was a small hole in each door through which the keeper passed the food, I thought I could at least communicate with some prisoner and maybe do

him a favor of some kind. So, through one of these holes I saw in one cell an old monk with a white beard, sitting on a bench and thinking, and it seemed to me he was thinking hard. I asked him if he didn't want to write a message to some friend or relative, and I would carry it myself. He seemed mighty glad and at once sat down and wrote you this letter, which I've carried every step of the way. If you find that you can help him in some way, sit down and write him and I'll guarantee to bring him your answer. Now, I'll go and have a good sleep in your barn. Tomorrow morning I'm off again."

The following morning the old vagabond came to see if I had written an answer. I told him I had done so, but that I thought it only right that I, to save him another such journey, should buy him a railroad ticket and give him also some money to enable him to buy food on the way.

"Not a kopek!" he shouted. "Do you think I'll take your money? Do you think that I am such a scoundrel as all that, to accept money for helping another fellow? If I was as low as that I'd jump into the sea—Not a kopek, sir! If I took it I'd be as bad as the priests. No, sir, not a kopek!"

Seeing that he was offended, I mollified him as best I could and gave him my letter. Then,

after a hearty breakfast of bread, cheese and coffee, he departed for Solovetsky.

Father Feodosi had written me to ask if I could get his Bible and some other books, which were in a certain library in Moscow, and send them to him in some way. In the covers of the Bible, he said, were concealed important documents, which he wanted to have in his hands. As he had written me the necessary directions and introductions, I replied that I would lose no time in following his instructions and, that, as I wished to communicate with him, I should come myself, as soon as I could.

A few days later, I was in Moscow, where I found the books and, concealed in the cover of the Bible, the important documents. I then took the train to Solovetsky, nearly a thousand miles to the north, which I reached about six days later.

The monastery is situated on a small island and, to reach it, I took a small steamer at Archangel. I went as a pilgrim and with me there were about fifty others who had come for the good of their souls.

As soon as I arrived, I was provided with a small room, and having eaten heartily of monastery fare I went with the other pilgrims to mass in the chapel. After this I walked through

the various buildings which comprised this famous old monastery. There were, besides several churches and chapels, also some shops and buildings of an industrial nature. But what interested me most of all was the great prison with its narrow trellised windows and gloomy walls.

In the garden of the prison I saw a stolid young monk who was tilling the ground.

"How many prisoners have you at present?" I asked him.

"About seventeen," he replied shortly.

"Can you tell me if there is among them a Father Feodosi?" said I.

"Do you know him?" asked the monk, curiously.

"I have never seen him," I replied, "but I know some of his friends in Moscow. They have requested me to bring him a Bible and some other books. Would it be possible to see him?"

"I don't know about that," he answered. "Ask the abbot. He may allow you to send him the books, but as to seeing him, why you know he is considered a great heretic and blasphemer. He condemns the Christian God and all the saints of our orthodox Church, and preaches a demoniac religion of his own, a sort of pantheism. He is undoubtedly possessed of the

devil and it is therefore extremely unlikely that anyone will be allowed to see him."

And so I called on the abbot, a solemn-looking old monk with a grey long beard, who received me courteously. He made no objection, after he had examined them, to my sending the books; but said he would not permit me to meet the Father, as it was especially forbidden by the Holy Synod. The books were therefore carried to him by a monk and I began to devise some scheme by which I could communicate with my friend.

Having discovered that the Father was imprisoned in a certain cell on the second floor with the window toward the park, I decided to speak once more the talk of the prisoners. I waited until dark and, as it was a rainy evening, there was little likelihood of my being discovered.

Fearing to speak aloud, I tapped on the stone wall beneath his window:

"Here is your friend. Are you there Father Feodosi?" I listened breathlessly. After repeated tappings, I succeeded in attracting his attention, for presently I saw a trembling hand thrust through the bars of the window above me.

"How happy I am to see you again," he tapped.

"How can I help you?" I asked.

"My only wish is for you to take care of my documents and to carry a message to my daughter," answered my friend, and he threw down a bundle, which I at once concealed about my person.

"I have already told you how I met my wife. Her maiden name was Miss Rose Lee, from New York," he continued. "Before I became a monk, I was a general in the army and my name was Count Nicolas Sheremetieff. My married life was very happy—so happy it could not last. She died within two years after my marriage, leaving a little daughter only a few months old. Her name is Varvara. When my wife died, I lost all interest in life and became a monk. What was even more foolish, I gave my daughter into the charge of a convent. I suspect that they are bringing her up to be a nun and, to save her from this terrible fate, I wish you to go to her and tell her it is her father's wish that she should leave the convent. She is now about twenty years old, and, if she is at all like her mother, must be a charming and beautiful girl.

"She does not know of her father's fate. I will throw you a cross, which contains her mother's picture, and this you must give her. She will inherit all my property. My will, a

letter to my daughter and another to our old maid-servant Marushka, in Kieff, are in the bundle. Marushka will help you to get her out of the monastery and to take her to the mother's home in America. Tell her all about her father and give her my blessing. After you have been successful in all this please send me a short dispatch as if you were congratulating me for a birthday, and I will know that my beloved Varvara is free. Good-bye."

Out of the window the Father now threw the cross, wrapped in a piece of cloth. The moon was just emerging from a cloud, and as I looked up I saw, through the bars, a pale face with a long, grey beard. It was full of calm majesty. And now, hearing a sound as of approaching footsteps, I hastily left the garden and was soon safe in my room. The next day I left Solovetsky for Kieff.

A week later, having arrived in Kieff, I began to search for Marushka, the old maid-servant of the Sheremetieffs. I found her in the large country house of the family, on the picturesque Dneiper River, where she now lived as caretaker. I handed her the note from her old master and, as she read it, she began to weep, saying: "Oh, he was such a kind man!"

She promised to do all she could to get the

girl Varvara out of the convent, saying that it might not prove to be so difficult after all, as the girl was allowed a short vacation of a few days every year, and that if she, Marushka, pleaded illness she would come at once. "When Varvara makes these visits," said Marushka, "she always comes in a closed carriage and, when out of the house, she always goes veiled, accompanied by a nun."

I stayed in the villa about two days. In one of the large rooms I saw a portrait of my friend in the uniform of a general. He looked very stately and handsome, yet it was not the face of a born soldier. It was rather that of the thinker and artist. On his left was the portrait of his wife. It represented a young woman in the bloom of her beauty; the eyes were full of vivacity and the mouth was of such charm that it could never be forgotten. Seeing these two together I was prepared to believe Marushka when she said:

"There was not a handsomer couple anywhere."

Just at twilight, on the second day of my visit, a closed carriage, drawn by two black horses, came to the door, and a lady, whose face was rendered invisible by a veil, jumped out and ran rapidly up the steps. It was Varvara. Within

she was met by Marushka, who told her that there was a visitor with news from her father.

In half an hour the door of the room, in which I was waiting, opened and a girl, with the face of a madonna, the most beautiful I have ever seen or imagined, entered timidly. I reached her my hand in greeting, and I could feel that she trembled. She was much excited, and seemed confused and shy.

"It is the first time in my life," she said simply, in a musical voice, "that I have shaken hands with a man or been alone with one in a room—the first time I have ever been unveiled before a man, and please do not think it strange that I am so embarrassed."

I explained my mission, telling her in detail all I knew about her father and his life, and then I gave her the various documents and the cross with her mother's picture. She pressed them tenderly to her bosom and was so much affected that she became silent, crying softly. I told her that her father wished me to send her to her mother's home in America. She covered her face with both hands, sobbing:

"Oh, but how can and dare I enter that world of sin of which I know so little."

I conversed with her until her fears were quieted and she seemed willing to leave the con-

vent and to comply with the wish of her father. I told her that I would secure a foreign passport and make all the preparations for her departure. I also sent a dispatch to her father as he had requested me to do. It took me over a week to arrange her escape; and so without misadventure we succeeded in passing the Russian frontier. At Hamburg we separated, she sailing to America, I returning to Russia. As the ship glided out of the dock she waved her handkerchief. Her lips moved, as if she were saying some last word—but because of the noise I could not hear. She was weeping and those eyes haunted me for many months. I have never seen her again nor have I ever heard from her father.

THE PRISONER'S FRIENDS

HAVING been accused of plotting against the Russian Government, I was confined for four years in various prisons of my native land. It was a cold and lonesome time. The longest part of my buried life I spent in the famous Dom Predvaritelnavo Zaklutchenia—the House of Preliminary Confinement, in St. Petersburg. It is the place to which prisoners are brought immediately after arrest and in which they remain until either convicted and exiled to Siberia or released.

My cell, number four hundred and ten, was on the fourth floor, and like most cells it was dark, narrow and cold. I shuddered when I crossed the threshold and the door clanged behind me; for I felt that I had left the world and all its loveliness forever behind, and that I was locked in a tomb. The naked interior of my dreadful home was of reddish iron and mournful dark stone. There was an inquisitional cruelty in the iron furniture, the stone floor and the gray walls. A feeling of being buried alive was my first impression.

To be forever alone, to hear never a word from the world without, never a syllable from human lips other than the grudging replies of the guards —this was almost death. My life was to become a long monotony, and I began to prepare to be imprisoned forever.

Every day, it is true, I was allowed to walk for fifteen minutes in the prison yard—but even there I was alone, and all I could see of the universal sky was a narrow strip of blue or a gray patch of cloud.

Once a month, however, it was my privilege to attend services in the prison chapel; for it must be admitted that the Russian Government is piously solicitous for the welfare of the souls of those whose bodies it starves and kills. But even in the church I was in a cell, and could see no one save the officiating priest.

Though I was deprived of human companionship, yet I was not wholly forsaken; for during my imprisonment I was consoled by the love of a dove and a mouse. We were indeed great friends and shared both joys and sorrows. We had a common language, the intuitive speech of the heart and the affections. Not the mouth, but the eyes and gestures express this wordless language. We had much to talk about and we understood each other very well.

A few weeks after my imprisonment, while walking in the yard, a white dove flew to my feet. The next day, in anticipation of such an event, I secretly provided myself with a few bread crumbs. The dove again appeared and it was not long before I succeeded in coaxing her to feed out of my hand. Not only would she fly to me in the yard, eat from my hand and look at me with her comforting eyes, but she would also perch on my shoulder, where I had put some bread crumbs, and murmur her monotonous, "Hu, hu, hu."

Having seen from the window, circling above the roof, the same white dove which I had fed in the courtyard, I determined to coax her to my cell. This I did by placing some crumbs of food on the window-sill. Her attention having been attracted to this particular spot, I felt that she would be likely to visit it again. The result was that the little dove and I soon became devoted friends. She always came in the early morning and at twilight; and when the window was closed she would tap on the pane with her beak until it was opened.

Sometimes her gentle little eyes were sad, as if she, too, suffered; often they were glad, as if with happiness.

"Hu, hu, hu," she would say, and when I

stroked her feathers she seemed truly grateful. After a while, when I had gained her entire confidence, she would fly into the cell and perch upon the bed or the table.

One day it occurred to me that she might be a carrier pigeon and that I could use her as a messenger. So I tied around her neck a little piece of paper, on which I had written these words:

"From a prisoner in Dom Predvaritelnavo Zaklutchenia. Please answer by the dove, who visits me every day. Send me a pencil and some thin paper. Prisoner Four Hundred and Ten."

The dove flew away with my letter and I eagerly awaited her return at twilight. However, she did not come back that evening as usual, and I began to fear that some misfortune had overtaken her, occasioned perhaps by my message. I did not sleep much that night. The next morning I heard the usual tap, tap, and hurriedly opening the window admitted my little messenger. Around her neck was another letter. Feverishly untying the string with which it was bound, I opened it and found a little bag and a blue silk ribbon, on which was written this reply:

"The dove brought me your letter. She and her little ones have a nest in our house. She is also my dearest friend and I am not jealous of

her friendship for you. I enclose pencil and paper; for I know you are deprived of these things. God help you. Your friend, Miss Liberty."

This was a great event in my monotonous life, and the dove became my greatest benefactor. Nearly every week she brought me a note from my unknown friend. Days, months and years passed like a dream. I almost forgot that there was another life besides the prison life; or other beings than the dove, the mouse and the mysterious Miss Liberty. Had it not been for my daily walk in the prison yard when I caught glimpses of the sky, the clouds and sometimes of the birds, the world I had lost would have been no more than a memory. It was hard to realize that I once had lived in that free world, that I had actually had birds and trees for my daily associates, that I could go where my will directed.

Just as the life in the world is full of incidents and change, so also in prison there were events of more or less importance. Sometimes a prisoner died or was released, and within a few hours the news was telegraphed from cell to cell by a certain code of the prisoners, who conversed by tapping on the walls. Then there were the new arrivals who brought the news of the world. But even more interesting than these were the stories

of the lives of the prisoners with which we made lighter many a heavy hour, and my correspondence, through the dove, with Miss Liberty was almost always concerning such subjects.

One morning the dove brought me a beautiful flower, a lily, and to this was attached a card, on which was written:

"Today is your mother's birthday. I send you this flower. Try to look beyond your present suffering. This discipline will make you strong. Goodbye."

"How strange," I thought, "that she knows so much about my life. I must find out who she is." I wrote her often asking her to give me her address and real name, or something to identify her personality. To such request she would reply:

"You know the dove, you touch her feathers and pet her; I do the same. We both love her and she loves us. Is not that sufficient? She is the medium between you and me. Her eyes bring me your greetings and the story of your emotions and I ask her to bring you mine. I love her."

It is a peculiarity of solitary confinement that one inevitably invests even the most material objects with personality. One ceases to meditate; animals and inanimate things are endowed with human attributes, so that one converses with them

as if they were friends and comrades. The dove and the mouse had become my sisters. They seemed like other selves, to be conscious of my sufferings, to know my thoughts and to sympathize with me.

How I loved them, and how in return they trusted me, cannot be appreciated by anyone who has not had a similar experience. It was a simple and innocent love—a thing almost incredible in this world of strife and bitterness, where the strong survive at the sacrifice of the weak.

While the eyes of the dove gave me the impression that she was a pessimist, those of the mouse suggested the optimist. In the beginning of our acquaintance the mouse was very timid and would not take the food I had placed on the floor until I was some distance away. In a few weeks, however, she was so tame that she would take the food from my fingers. In a month or two she lost all her fear and would play with me, dancing around me like a tiny dog. She was fond of being tickled and scratched on the back, and I would stroke her fur as one strokes a cat.

Early in the morning she would come from a small hole under the water pipe. After listening a moment, she would run up the leg of the table and, reaching the top, would dash at the crumbs or the pieces of fat which I had placed there.

Having finished her breakfast, she would jump down upon the bed and crawl under the blankets. At first I resented this intrusion. It did not impress me as particularly pleasant; for, as with most people, the touch of a rodent had always made me feel rather creepy. But when I understood the intimate affection of the little animal, I could no longer repulse her. Sometimes when I awoke earlier than usual, I would even wait for her. I named her "Tsakki."

"Tsakki, tell me how old you are," I would say to her.

Then she would close her eyes and nod her little head, seeming to say:

"I don't remember; for we don't measure time as you do. We are not so stupid. It is enough that we live and are happy." Then I would ask:

"Tsakki, are you married or single?"

Wagging her little tail, she would reply; for so I interpreted her look and attitude:

"I have my nest, my children and my beloved, but I've never heard of marriage. We live, love and are happy. Isn't that enough?"

Thus I would talk with her for hours. She understood only the speech of my eyes. The desire to speak becomes almost a mania with prisoners in solitary confinement. They have a desire to communicate with everything: with the clouds,

the stars, the moon, the birds and also with their own hallucinations.

Once Tsakki's eyes were sad, like those of a weeping child.

"Tsakki, what is the matter?" I asked. "Have you lost one of your little ones? Or has your beloved forsaken you?"

"Everything," she seemed to reply, shaking her head, "but I shall learn to forget and soon shall be happy again." And happiness was indeed her normal condition.

She was fond of music. Often I would hum some tune, or play on a string held taut between my fingers, and to this she would listen for hours. She seemed to appreciate only the music of very high notes, while to the lower tones she remained absolutely indifferent. Tsakki was indeed a paragon of virtue in every way, except when she was jealous of my other friend, the dove. She did not like it when I stroked the dove and fed her from my hand, and often she bristled as if she would attack the dove with her sharp teeth. The dove was very generous and willingly left her food for the mouse.

One evening, after several days of absence, Tsakki came again very shyly. I was just eating my supper when I heard her tiny voice. She emerged from the hole beneath the water pipe

and scampered forward and backward several times as if to attract my attention. Presently another and smaller head appeared, and I realized that the mouse had come with her little one, of which, to judge by her actions and her sparkling eyes, she was exceedingly proud.

She was not able, however, to persuade the youngster to venture in my direction. It was very shy and timid, and kept a safe distance. I gave the mother a small piece of fat, which she carried to her infant; and the prodigy, as if to show what it could do, at once began to eat it. Then there was heard the sound of feet passing through the corridor, and mother and child scampered fearfully away.

For several weeks the little one accompanied its mother, who seemed very anxious that we should become friends. I exhausted all my arts and hours of patience to attract the timid creature; but it would not become my friend. It was entirely different from its mother. Finally it ceased to come and I did not see it any more.

Tsakki seemed, by some instinct, to know when I was not disposed to caress or to pet her. At such times she would not bother me at all, but after getting her meal would disappear. She knew when I was in a talkative or in a quiet humor and accommodated herself to my feelings.

When I was sad she looked at me with her beady eyes, wagged her thin tail and went away. When I was merry she jumped around and expressed her good humor.

She was, however, a thief and lacked the sense of honor, as men recognize it. I could leave neither meat nor sugar on the table or on the shelves, for Tsakki would return at night while I was sleeping and would steal it all.

I used to tease her by filling the meat with salt. Not suspecting any wrong she would grasp it, but when she began to eat she became very angry. When I offered it again she would refuse to take it, or would bite my finger furiously. Food was the sole concern of her life. She was a real materialist and had no other ideals than her daily bread and her nest.

We quarreled with each other, we understood each other and we loved each other. For two years Tsakki shared all my joys and sufferings. I loved her companionship, especially when in my loneliness I felt that I was forsaken by my friends and by all those who once had loved me. When I felt lonely and when I could endure the everlasting silence no longer, I found consolation in my conversation with Tsakki, in playing with her or in silently watching her alert little ways. She had become like my own child to me.

Once, on a rainy autumn evening, when the wind howled and roared around the towers and the chimneys of the gloomy prison, I was lying on my hard bed, mournfully thinking. A prisoner next to my cell had just told me, through the language of the walls, the tragedy of his life, and another, above me, had informed me of the suicide of his neighbor who had hanged himself to the wall. Their talk had made me sorrowful and the world seemed like a desert where joy could never come.

Being thus in a mood of deep melancholy and of sad reflections I was surprised by a very unusual noise, as if someone were beating against the wall in the next cell. I jumped out of my bed and listened; but I could hear nothing but the steps of the walking sentinel in the corridor as he passed my door. After a while I heard again the same fluttering noise.

I looked out of my window and there against the window pane like the shadow of a ghost stood my friend, the dove. I was greatly surprised to find her so late at night at my window and in such stormy weather; for this never had happened before. I hurriedly opened the window and she flitted inside. She was in an altogether unusual state, for she trembled as if she were in great fear. I looked at her feathers, her wings and

feet but I could discover nothing wrong with her, except her great excitement. Caressing her tenderly for some minutes I asked with intimate sympathy:

"Tell me, *golubtchik*—little dove, what is the matter with you? Has somebody hurt you or was your life in danger? How is Miss Liberty? Is she ill? Tell me."

Her little eyes were filled with such fear that it almost made me cry to look at them. They were the eyes of a child who has suddenly lost its mother. I comforted her, stroked her feathers and beak, and offered her some water. This she accepted and after she had drunk thirstily she perched on my hand. Convulsive shudders now and then indicated that she was still in a spell of fear. I questioned her about everything, and imagined various tragedies in her eyes. But I was not able to discover the cause of her sorrow.

For many hours I kept her by me while she looked with great dread out of the window as if some great trouble were there. Only near me did she seem satisfied and quiet. She sat calmly on my hand or on my shoulder and gazed at me with a gentle look.

"What can I do for you?" I asked her.

"Your love is all I ask," she seemed to reply,

for so I interpreted her look. "I am hungry for it. Let me be with you. It is so dreadful there in the dark. How cosy it is to be with a beloved companion."

I could not send her away, although according to the prison rules I was not allowed to keep her in the cell. However, I intended to have her over night with me. I put her on the edge of my iron bed, but she was so frightened that she refused to be a moment alone. The keeper put out the fire and the room became pitch dark. He did not notice the dove in the cell when he looked through the hole in the door. I was glad and went to bed, keeping my hand on her wings, which made her calm and quiet. And then I fell asleep.

After some hours, while we were asleep, Tsakki came to examine the table and the shelves, to steal some food for her children. Seeing the dove slumbering on my bed she ran up to her angrily. I was awakened by the rustle of my excited friend flying frightened around in the darkness. Recognizing the seriousness of the situation I called to the dove, comforting her while I rebuked Tsakki and ordered her to leave us alone, which she did only after a long scolding. After a time of quietness I again fell asleep and thus we remained until dawn.

The dove, now awakening, flew upon the table and picked up some bread crumbs for her breakfast. I got up also, wrote a letter to Miss Liberty about the curious excitement of our messenger, bound it around her neck and opened the window. She looked timidly back at me and at the flying clouds and disappeared.

Weeks passed and the dove did not come. I waited and waited. Heavy presentiments and sad thoughts began to depress me and I felt in agony, as one feels when he awaits his sweetheart and she never comes, for it seemed to me that I had at once lost my best friend. "Yet, such is life!" I said to myself and I tried to forget. But do what I could, it was impossible to shake off the memory of my lost companion. Always the dove was before my eyes and I almost saw visions of her.

One Sunday morning, on a cold winter day, the dove again appeared at the window and gazed into the cell as if to find out if I, the old friend, were still there. It was as if I had refound my lost bride. I opened the window, put out my hand and cried:

"Come in. How do you do? Tell me what has been the matter."

She recognized me, came timidly in and looked at me curiously, with her usual melancholy ex-

pression. Her appearance so impressed me that I felt almost as if she were a lost child that was found. I took her in my hand, pressed her head to my face and caressed her with tender words. She seemed very happy and walked around the cell, perched upon the table, and pecked tenderly at my cheeks. After the first moments of greeting were over, I noticed a small bag around her neck which I untied immediately. It was a note from my mysterious friend. This is what she wrote:

"The interruption of our correspondence was apparently due to an accident to our messenger. Did you get that souvenir I sent through her five weeks ago? It was a stormy day and I felt also a tempest in my emotions. The dove today returned frightened and depressed after several weeks of absence. Where was she those many cold days, and what did she do? She seems to tell me with her mournful "hu, hu, hu," but I am unable to understand. Please write me how you are and what you know about her absence. I hope she will find you safe and well. Your friend, Miss Liberty."

I read and reread the note and tried to get from its carrier some explanation. To all my questions she was dumb. Yet she was in her usual disposition and ate the breakfast I had pre-

pared for her from my daily allowance. Now and then she shook her wings, glanced at me and at the blue sky through the trellised window and muttered her "hu, hu, hu." I then wrote Miss Liberty that I had never received her souvenir and that I did not know what had occasioned the absence of the dove. I asked my friend also what she meant by "the tempest in her emotions," but to this she never replied.

Thus the dove became again my benefactor and like a messenger of freedom brought relief from my sorrow and sufferings in that lonely world. I awaited her arrival with eagerness and I felt depressed when she failed to come. I was happy when she brought me news from that world without, which to me had become almost a dream.

A few days later I received a note from my unknown friend, informing me that I should soon be free. I told some of my fellow prisoners, though they refused to believe it could be anything but a joke of the keepers. But all the same the dove proved a true prophet. At eleven o'clock the same night the keeper entered my cell and told me I was free.

And then I had to leave the cell where I had spent those terrible years. Words cannot describe my gladness, yet my joy was not

unmixed with sorrow. It was with a keen pang that I caressed my little Tsakki for the last time and left my cell for the wide world.

As soon as I reached the street I found a carriage waiting for me and in the carriage a lady. It was Miss Liberty. She spoke only in monosyllables and would not reveal her identity, yet through the heavy veil that covered her face I could see that she was a young and very beautiful girl. She drove me to the railway station, and there she gave me a ticket to my home. The train started, she waved her hand and I saw her no more.

She probably was an ardent sympathizer with the cause, one whose influential connections and wealth enabled her to accomplish what otherwise would have been impossible. Whether through some plea or through bribery she secured my release I cannot say. Yet she was an angel of deliverance, whom I can never forget. The dove was probably a carrier pigeon that she had trained to do her errands of mercy.

Years have passed since I left my cell and my little friends, the dove and the mouse. The realization that I should see them no more and that my talks with them would be soon only a memory—laid then a heaviness upon my heart. I hardly thought that this would be so; but when

lieve, regulate a man's relation to himself, to other selves and to mankind as a whole.

May they lead to that infinite goal, which, as the deepest truth, the highest beauty and the greatest freedom, men call God.

Only when I began to shape my life in accordance with the Golden Rules, did I acquire that balance which is happiness; only then did I cease to drift from illusion to illusion and attain the peace of the real harmony. As soon as I discovered that I was Everything and that the universe was only a huge I—I felt happy; for I felt that this discovery was the real law of my life. It revealed not only my duty to myself and to others, but also my relation to the Supreme Ego. Here was the voice which I could follow to the end, and which led me ever upwards from harmony to greater harmony, from happiness to higher happiness.

In order to discover the Golden Rules I listened to that voice within myself which seemed an echo of the soul of all mankind. My fundamental premises were:

1

I LIVE, THEREFORE I AM.

2

I THINK, THEREFORE I KNOW

3

I WILL, THEREFORE I SHALL.

1

Before one does or knows anything he must live. He lives as a self and his life, as he feels it, is all of which he can be absolutely positive. All else is hypothesis. Life is the first condition of his individual I.

2

Man's thinking is the next reality. It shows him how to live and enables him to distinguish between things subjective and objective, and between the personal and the social. In the subjective he absorbs the social, in the objective the social absorbs him. Only by keeping the equilibrium between these two tendencies is he able to exist; for as too much of the subjective means that he absorbs the social to the point of his self extinction, so too much of the objective ends in his absorption by the social. The more perfect the equilibrium, the more intensive and

extensive is the life. By thinking or knowledge therefore one can discover those rules, which, as the Golden Rules, will enable him to keep his equilibrium. This is the condition of his social I.

3

The consciousness that man is a living and intellectual being causes him to desire to free himself from the influence of his surroundings and thus to be a world in himself. It reveals to him a will of his own in opposition to the will of the universe. As his thinking gave man the laws of his equilibrium so his will is seen to be the realizing factor thereof. This is the condition of man's universal I.

These three fundamental conditions lead us to the seven fundamental rules of our life, which are these:

1

THE RULE OF SELF-PRESERVATION

2

THE RULE OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT

3

THE RULE OF SELF-MASTERY

4

THE RULE OF SYMPATHY

5

THE RULE OF JUSTICE

6

THE RULE OF HEROISM

7

THE RULE OF HIGHEST IDEAL

1

PRESERVE YOURSELF!

Self-preservation is the first commandment. All things tell me to live. I am hungry for life —more life—and to have this life I desire to appropriate the universe. Self-preservation is enjoyment. I enjoy all energies which enable me to feel that I live, enjoy, work and rest; I enjoy all material pleasures and also the possession of such things as enable me to feel that I am a universe in myself. Self-preservation makes many demands upon me. When I comply I enjoy; when I deny, I suffer. To live means to enjoy, and enjoyment is thus self-preservation.

2

DEVELOP YOURSELF!

My self-development is the impulse to perfect my powers of self-preservation; for each new pleasure gives me so much more of my surround-

ings. Self-development is an increased capacity of enjoyment. The joy of today, which was the desire of yesterday, will not satisfy me tomorrow. It is therefore necessary to develop my senses until they can feel more complicated impressions. The evolution from simple to complex is progress. All civilization, all human progress is the result of self-development. Only by developing myself shall I be able to enjoy more, and the basis of such development is knowledge; for the greater the knowledge the greater the emotion, and emotion is the capacity of self-preservation.

3

CONTROL YOURSELF!

As the universal will controls the individual will, so by controlling myself, do I dominate the universe within. My self-control, as the final achievement of my ego, is the basis of every freedom. Self-control means the mastery of my enjoyments. It means that I shall be lord of my instincts—the king of the domain of self. To achieve such self-control I must be able to subordinate pleasures merely instinctive for those which are more emotional and more developed. For whereas the instinctive pleasures are those which I share in common with others, the plants, the animals and so on, the emotional

and developed pleasures are those which are peculiar to myself and are therefore more individual. The more emotional and developed one becomes, the more individual he is, and as there is no limit to individuality, one is thus also more free, more the master of himself. To be free it is therefore necessary to control one's self.

The first voice of my ego is the demand of my enjoyment, the second of my knowledge, and the third of my will or character, and these three rules are the three fundamental imperatives of my egoism.

4

HAVE SYMPATHY FOR THE SUFFERERS!

The three previous rules, constituting my demands on the universal, were the voices of my ego. This rule, as the demand of the social life upon my individual life, is the first voice of altruism. Sympathy is the social emotion. Whereas the voice of my individual ego demands self-preservation, the voice of the social ego demands the preservation of society. Through sympathy I compromise my own pleasure for the sake of the pleasure of others, and this at once brings me into harmony with the universe. When I sympathize with the sufferer I expand

my enjoyments into the universal. I shall feel the emotions of others as I feel my own. I shall know that what is bad for me is bad for all. Furthermore, recognizing that conscience is the tribunal which adjusts my relation to others, I shall learn to listen to its voice as the very first demand of the social soul; for only thus can universal sympathy join the individual to the nation and the nation to mankind.

5

BE JUST TO EACH AND ALL!

Justice is moral knowledge as sympathy is social enjoyment. By being just I increase the enjoyment of my surroundings. "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you," is the command of the social self. Duty to family, to one's neighbor and to country is the obvious demand of justice; and to relieve suffering is the ultimate purpose of this demand. The urge to altruistic development shall overbalance the urge to egoism, and my self-enjoyment shall be subordinate to the social enjoyment. Humanity is the heart of justice and conscience is its executive power.

6

SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR OTHERS!

The sacrifice of self for the good of others is